NATION

Faridabad student blackmailed with AI pics of 3 sisters kills self

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BUSINESS

SC tells Centre to rethink VI's ₹5,606 crore AGR dues

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Ranji Trophy: Prithvi slams third-fastest double ton

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Yunus gifts Pak General map with NE in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 26 OCT

Interim Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus presented a map indicating parts of India's Northeast as Bangladeshi territory to Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, during their meeting on Saturday. The map, featured in Yunus' book "Art of Triumph: Bangladesh's New Dawn," has raised eyebrows for echoing the "Greater Bangladesh" narrative often propagated by fringe Islamist groups. Senior Indian intelligence officials deemed this act a "psy-war signal" intended to undermine India's territorial integrity. *—Agencies*

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A month later, Vijay meets Karur victims' kin

MAHABALIPURAM, 27 OCT

Actor Vijay expressed his sorrow to the families of the victims from the tragic Karur stampede, which killed 41 individuals on 27 September. In an emotional closed-door meeting held in Mahabalipuram, Vijay acknowledged that he could not visit Karur due to travel restrictions but assured families that he would meet them there soon. He pledged monetary support for education and self-employment initiatives. Meeting privately with family members of 37 victims, Vijay stated, "Though I can never compensate for the loss of their dear ones, I will take care of the affected families as if they were my own." *—PTI*

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Shreyas Iyer out of ICU after internal bleeding

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

India ODI vice-captain Shreyas Iyer was admitted to the ICU at a Sydney hospital after suffering internal bleeding from a rib injury during the third match against Australia, but was reportedly later released after his condition stablised. Iyer injured his left rib cage whilst taking a diving catch to dismiss Alex Carey. He later fainted in the dressing room with alarmingly low vital parameters and was rushed to the hospital. Scans revealed a laceration injury to his spleen. The 30-year-old cricketer is medically stable and recovering, according to the BCCI. He will remain under observation for two to seven days. *—PTI*

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Cyclone Montha: Odisha, Andhra brace for impact

BHUBANESWAR, 27 OCT

The Odisha government geared up evacuation of people from vulnerable places amid inclement weather in eight southern districts where a "red alert" has been sounded, as the deep depression in the Bay of Bengal on Monday intensified into cyclonic storm 'Montha' and rolling towards east coast at a speed of 15kmph, officials said. Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority Managing Director Prakhar Jain said the coastal districts are experiencing rain and strong gales. Telangana Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy directed officials to ensure that cyclone does not disrupt the paddy harvest. *—PTI*

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SIR Phase 2 to start in 12 states on 4 Nov

Assam voter rolls to be announced separately

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The Election Commission will conduct phase two of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories starting 4 November, **Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar** announced on Monday.

The states and Union Territories are: the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Among these, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal will go to the polls in 2026. Kumar clarified that in Assam, where polls are also due in 2026, the revision of electoral rolls will be announced separately.

Kumar said a separate provision of the Citizenship Act was applicable to Assam.

"Under the Citizenship Act, there are separate provisions for citizenship in Assam. Under the supervision of the Supreme Court, the exercise of checking citizenship is about to be completed. The 24 June SIR order was for the entire country. Under such circumstances, this would not have applied to Assam," Kumar said at a press conference. "So there will be separate revision orders issued for Assam, and a separate SIR date will be announced."

He highlighted that the first phase of the SIR was completed in Bihar with zero appeals.

"SIR will ensure no eligible elector is left out and no ineligible elector is included in poll rolls," Kumar said. "Phase two of SIR will cover 51 crore voters."

The CEC said state governments were bound to provide the necessary personnel to the Election Commission for the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of polls.

The CEC also ruled out any confrontation with the West Bengal government, where the ruling Trinamool Congress has expressed reservations about the SIR exercise in the state. *—PTI*

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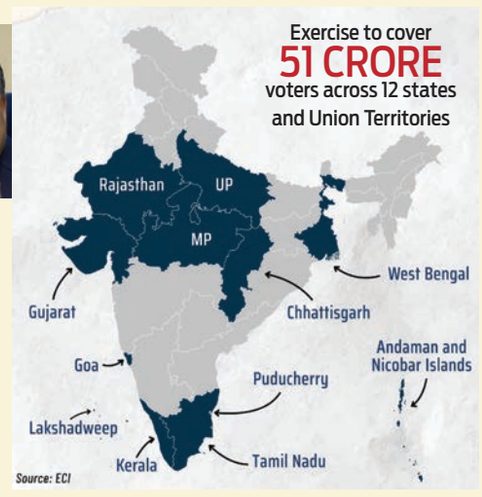
Electoral Roll Revision: Phase II Coverage



Timeline for SIR

4 NOV: Enumeration process begins

9 DEC: Draft rolls will be published

7 FEB: Final electoral rolls

PHOTO: PTI

India shown in bad light: SC raps UTs, states on stray dogs

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday slammed the states and Union territories, which have not filed their compliance affidavits in the stray dogs case, and said continuous incidents were happening and the country was being "shown as down" in foreign nations.

The apex court directed the Chief Secretaries of the states, except West Bengal and Telangana, to remain present before it on 3 November to explain why compliance affidavits were not filed despite the court's 22 August order.

The top court said except West Bengal, Telangana and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), none of the other states and UTs have filed their compliance affidavits.

"No response, nothing. And continuous incidents are happening. Your country is being shown as down in foreign countries," a three-judge special bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria said.

It noted that pursuant to the 22 August order, only three compliance affidavits were filed.

The bench noted that during the hearing, there was no representation from states which have not filed their affidavits.

On 22 August, the apex court expanded the scope of the stray dogs case beyond the confines of Delhi-NCR, and directed that all states and UTs be made parties in the matter. *—PTI*

CJI Gavai recommends Justice Surya Kant as next CJI

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai has recommended to the Centre the name of Justice Surya Kant as the next CJI.

Justice Surya Kant, the second senior-most Supreme Court judge after the incumbent CJI Gavai, is set to become the 53rd Chief Justice of India on 24 November after CJI Gavai's retirement on 23 November.

Justice Surya Kant, who was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on 24 May, 2019, would have a tenure of nearly 15 months years as the CJI. He is due to retire on 9 February, 2027. The retirement age of Supreme Court judges is 65 years.

According to the memorandum of procedure which guide the appointment, transfer and elevation of Supreme Court and high court judges, the chief justice of India should be the senior-most judge of the SC considered fit to hold the office. *—PTI*

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India flags 'constricted' energy trade at ASEAN

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday raised serious concerns over "increasingly constricted" energy trade, selective application of global norms, and restricted market access during his address at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur.

Amid strained ties with the US over India's purchase of Russian crude oil, Jaishankar said, "Energy trade is increasingly constricted, with resulting market distortions. Principles are applied selectively, and what is preached is not necessarily practised." He added that reliable supply chains and equitable access to technology and resources must be ensured.

He stressed that the world must adopt "zero tolerance" towards terrorism, affirming that the right to defend against it "can never be compromised."

Jaishankar also supported the Gaza peace plan and called for an early end to the Ukraine conflict, noting their impact on food and energy security. *—PTI*

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CHHATH POOJA

Families from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand came together at Ulsoor Lake in Bengaluru to celebrate Chhath Pooja on Monday. The festival is celebrated to honour the sun god Surya. Monday marked the main day, Sandhya Arghya, dedicated to the setting sun. Families gather at water bodies, carrying the soop (bamboo basket) filled with prasad **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Will continue for 5 years if High Command wants: CM

MANGALURU, 27 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said he would continue in office for the full five-year term, subject to the Congress High Command's decision. Responding to a question on whether he would remain Chief Minister for five years, Siddaramaiah told reporters, "If the High Command decides."

Earlier in the day, former minister KN Rajanna's told media in City that Siddaramaiah was "indispensable" to the Congress. Asked about his close confidant's statement, Siddaramaiah said, "It is his personal opinion".

On multiple Chief Ministerial aspirants within the Congress, Siddaramaiah said, "In a democracy, we cannot tell those in the race not to compete. Anyone may claim to be a candidate, but the High Command will decide." *—PTI*

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Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh CM Siddaramaiah took oath on Awareness Week at Vidhana Soudha **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Another racial attack: Indian-origin woman raped in UK

LONDON, 27 OCT

A 32-year-old man has been arrested following the racially aggravated rape of a 20-year-old woman of Indian heritage in England's West Midlands. Two days after the attack in Walsall's Park Hall area, West Midlands Police apprehended the suspect in Perry Barr on Monday morning. Detective Superintendent Ronan Tyrer described the arrest as a "significant development" after officers launched an urgent manhunt.

Police released CCTV footage of the white male suspect, believed to be in his 30s with short hair and dark clothing, as part of their investigation. The victim, locally identified as Punjabi, continues to receive support from specially trained officers. The attack comes weeks after another racially aggravated rape of a British Sikh woman in nearby Oldbury, though police say they are not linking the cases. British Sikh MPs, Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, condemned the "repeated pattern" of violent attacks on women in the region, calling the racial elements "deeply disturbing".

Chief Superintendent Phil Dolby of Walsall Police confirmed an increased police presence following community concerns. Specialist officers vowed to pursue the case to its logical end. *—PTI*

City delivery guy held for molesting Brazilian model

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

RT Nagar Police have arrested a delivery agent for molesting a woman Brazilian model in the City while fulfilling delivery order.

On 17 Oct, the victim ordered groceries on a mobile app. The incident took place when the accused went to the address to deliver the items and allegedly touched her inappropriately when she came to get the order. The victim them pushed him out the door.

The victim did not initially report the incident out of fear, but three of her flatmates approached the owner of the company they were employed at and flagged the incident.

Based on the complaint filed by Karthik Vinayak, the employer of the victim, the police registered an FIR against the accused charging him under section 75(1) (offence of sexual harassment) and 76 (assaulting a woman or using criminal force against her with the intent to disrobe her or compel her to be naked) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, on Saturday.

The police tracked down the accused identified as Kumar, a diploma student working part-time as a delivery executive. He was arrested and remanded in judicial custody on Sunday. *—Agencies*

K'TAKA HC BINS RAPE CASE

'Consensual relationship can't be criminal'

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Karnataka High Court has quashed an FIR against a 23-year-old man accused of raping a woman he met on a dating app, observing that a relationship entered into by mutual consent cannot be converted into a criminal offence except in the "clearest of cases".

Allowing the petition filed by the man, Justice M Nagaprasanna said, "A relationship born of mutual volition, even if it founders in disappointment, cannot, save in the clearest of cases, be transmuted into an offence under the criminal law."

According to the prosecution, the accused and the complainant got acquainted through a dating app and later maintained regular contact on Instagram for over a year. On 11 August, 2024, the two met in person, had a meal together, and subsequently went to a hotel where they allegedly engaged in physical intimacy. The next day, the man dropped the woman back at her residence.

The complaint stated that the following day the woman underwent a medical examination at a hospital, where she was reportedly informed that she had been sexually assaulted. She then lodged a police complaint, leading to the arrest of the accused.

Seeking to quash the case, the petitioner contended that the interactions between the two, including photos, chats, and videos clearly showed that their relationship was consensual. He also alleged that the investigating officer had deliberately omitted these details from the chargesheet.

Justice Nagaprasanna observed that the messages exchanged between the two "are not in good taste" but make it evident that the acts were consensual.

"If the present prosecution were permitted to meander into a trial, it would be nothing but a ritualistic procession towards miscarriage of justice and indeed become an abuse of the process of law," the judge remarked. *—PTI*

GP member shot at by gang of 6 near Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

A gram panchayat member was injured after being shot by six motorcycle-borne attackers near Bengaluru on Sunday evening. 50-year-old Saleem Pasha was discussing matters with villagers in Islampur, Nelamangala taluk, around 6.30pm when the assailants arrived on two motorcycles. One gunman fired at him with a country-made pistol, striking his shoulder. Pasha is out of danger and receiving treatment, police said. Officers have identified the attackers, who are from the same village, and suspect personal enmity as motive. "The culprits will soon be arrested and strict action will be taken," said KS Nagaraj, Additional Superintendent of police for City Rural district. Preliminary probe revealed he was previously attacked in a separate incident. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Nandi Hills' Tippu Palace vandalised with Bishnoi name

NANDI HILLS, 27 OCT

The visitors to Nandi Hills on early Monday expressed outrage upon discovering graffiti featuring the name of extremist figure Lawrence Bishnoi on a wall of the renowned Tippu Palace. The palace, an important historical site under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), was defaced with paint, prompting a swift response from authorities. Ramesh, the special officer for Nandi Hills, noted, "The graffiti must have been written during the wee hours on Monday." Ramesh added that the tourism development department had constructed a Basava mantapa and installed grill fencing, which had been vandalised "at least 4-5 times" during the past three months. *—Salar News*

4 smugglers caught with 750kg of sandalwood

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Four members of an interstate gang have been arrested in City for illegally transporting 750kg of sandalwood worth Rs 1.12 crore. After receiving a tip-off, the Police detained Abdul Kalam, Rama Bhopal, Sheikh Sharukh, and Paramesh, all from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. Officers rushed to Siddapur around midnight on 16 October, where they found a Mahindra XUV with Delhi registration and a Mahindra Bolero with Andhra plates, which were parked suspiciously near a hotel. Inside the vehicles, officers found sacks filled with decayed onions. Further inspection revealed sandalwood logs hidden within it. During interrogation, the accused confessed that they intended to sell it illegally. *—PTI*

2 cops suspended for sexually abusing beautician

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Two Bengaluru police officers have been suspended after a beautician accused them of cheating, criminal intimidation and sexual harassment. Inspector Sunil HB and Assistant Sub-Inspector Prakash, both attached to the DJ Halli police station, were placed under suspension following the woman's complaint on Monday. The woman alleged that Sunil obtained her contact details about a year ago under the pretence of helping with a financial dispute case. After befriending her, he allegedly invited her to his flat in Peenya and later booked a hotel room where he had sexual relations with her on the pretext of marriage. She claimed that Sunil began avoiding her several months later, leading her to realise she had been deceived. The woman also accused ASI Prakash of demanding sexual favours. *—PTI*

Sugarcane farmers prefer M'rashtra mills

As M'rashtra offers higher prices, ryots blame K'taka govt

HIREKOP RAJAN SAMUEL
BELAGAVI, 27 OCT

Thousands of sugarcane growers from Northern Karnataka are supplying their crop to mills across the Maharashtra border, lured by higher prices, prompt payments, and greater transparency.

Farmer organisations, including the Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha and Bharatiya Krushik Samaj, have blamed the State government's policies, lower procurement prices, and delayed payments for the exodus.

"Karnataka's sugar mills, especially in Belagavi district, have not cleared dues for cane supplied since 2023," said Chunappa Pujeri, State President of the Raita Sangha. "In Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, mills pay Rs 3,400–3,500 per tonne and clear payments within 15 days. In Karnataka, the rate is Rs 2,900–3,050, and payments are often delayed by more than a year."

According to farmer groups, over 25,000 growers from the Kittur Karnataka region regularly supply cane to Kolhapur-based mills such as Hemaras, Harali, Hamidwadi, Shahu, Datt, Gurudatt, and Panchaganga, which together crush over 10 lakh tonnes annually.

Bharatiya Krushik Samaj President Siddagouda Modagi said Maharashtra mills also have fairer practices. "Many mills in Karnataka manipulate weighing and sugar recovery calculations. We have protested repeatedly against such irregularities," he said.

Modagi warned that the steady outflow of cane is eroding Karnataka's agricultural tax revenue. He also criticised the State government for failing to announce the crushing season or fix cane prices, even as Maharashtra begins operations on 1 November. "The Centre has set the Fair and Remunerative Price at Rs 3,550 per tonne, but Karnataka has yet to implement it," he added.

Sugar industry expert Rayanna RC attributed the price gap partly to lower sugar recovery rates—9.5 per cent to 12.8 per cent in Belagavi and Bagalkot districts—compared to higher yields in Kolhapur. "Old machinery and inefficient operations delay crushing and payments," he said, noting that several northern mills are running losses due to poor management and inadequate State support.

Farmer groups allege that many sugar mills in North Karnataka are owned by politicians who delay payments worth hundreds of crores.

Congress MLC and Harsha Sugar Mills owner Channaraj Hattiholi rejected the charge, saying, "Since inception, I have cleared all payments promptly and maintained transparency." *—Salar News*

Thousands of sugarcane farmers in North Karnataka are supplying their crop to mills in Maharashtra **PHOTO: PTI**

> **In Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, mills pay Rs 3,400–3,500 per tonne and clear payments within 15 days. In Karnataka, the rate is Rs 2,900–3,050, and payments are often delayed by more than a year**
>
> **—CHUNAPPA PUJERI,** State President of the Raita Sangha

STATE TO FORM TASK FORCE FOR HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

Khandre said the government will form a State-level Wildlife Human Conflict Management Task Force comprising local people's representatives, NGOs and environmental experts to control human-wildlife conflict.

Protesters surround Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Monday when he visited Mysuru after a farmer was killed by a tiger **PHOTO: SALAR**

KHANDRE GREETED BY PROTESTING FARMERS AS TIGER KILLS 1 IN MYSURU

MYSURU, 27 OCT

A day after a tiger claimed the life of a farmer in Saragur taluk in Mysuru district, Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre on Monday was greeted by farmers protesting in front of the KR Hospital mortuary on Monday.

The agitators, under the banner of Karnataka Sugarcane Growers Association, alleged that Khandre failed to curb the menace of wild animals in the human habitat.

They also demanded an increase in the relief amount.

Khandre was visiting the mortuary to pay respects to Rajashekhar, the deceased farmer, but was met by farmers shouting slogans against the State and Union government.

They urged the State government to increase the death compensation to Rs 50 lakh compensation for victims of wild animals attack and also people injured by wild animals menace.

They also appealed to constitute a special team, task force to tackle tiger and jumbo menace in forest adjacent villages of Mysuru, Chamarajanagar district.

Khandre attributed the increase of human-wildlife conflicts to deforestation.

State Social Welfare and district minister Dr HC Mahadevappa also said that he would direct deputy commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy to clear illegal resorts in forest fringe villages, besides initiating other measures. *—Salar News*

D'sthala SIT report likely by Oct end

The Special Investigation Team visited several sites in Dharmasthala to probe the masked complainant's claim of mass burials **PHOTO: PTI**

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday said that the SIT probing into the allegations of mass burials in the temple town of Dharmasthala is likely to submit its report by the end of October.

He, however, said it remains to be seen whether the SIT report will be a final one or an interim report.

"The Special Investigation Team has said that they would give the report in October. The might probably give it before 31 October or plus or minus two days, they may give the report. We have told them to report comprehensively and submit the final report," Parameshwara said in response to a question.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the SIT had said that the report will be submitted after getting the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) reports, chemical analysis and others.

"Because the bones that were gathered should be subjected to chemical analysis and concluded. After completing all this, they (SIT) have said that they will submit the report," he added.

The SIT, formed by the State government, has conducted excavations at multiple locations identified by the complainant in the forested areas along the banks of the Netravathi River in Dharmasthala, finding some skeletal remains. *—PTI*

'High Command hasn't spoken on Cabinet rejig'

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday said there is no indication from the Congress High Command regarding the Cabinet reshuffle or leadership change in the State.

"I'm not aware of anything. We cannot speak about the High Command's decision. Let's wait and see what they decide. Unnecessarily making statements before the media will lead to further confusion. Has anyone from the High Command spoken on this till now? We don't have any information from the High Command," Parameshwara said. "If there is any information from the High Command regarding the Cabinet reshuffle or leadership change, we can react."

Amid calls for a "Dalit Chief Minister" with senior leader and Minister KH Muniyappa as CM, he said he welcomes if it happens, as he too belongs to the same oppressed community, but ultimately the High Command has to decide on the matter.

> **I don't know anything about the November revolution. There is a party and there is high command, why will they let any revolution happen? They will not allow it**
>
> —Satish Jarkiholi, PWD Minister

Parameshwara said, "Muniyappa was a seven times MP, it is not a normal thing. He is senior, he was a minister at the Centre. He is now minister in the State. He is capable and has the eligibility. What's wrong with that (him becoming CM)? I will be happy if Muniyappa is made the CM. We belong to the same community. We will be happy that the community has got an opportunity. The community that faced oppression for a long, if someone from that community heads the administration, won't we be happy?" *—PTI*

Assam CM calls Priyank a 'first class idiot' over industry row

GUWAHATI/BENGALURU, 27 OCT

A war of words erupted between State IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge and the Assam BJP unit after the former remarked that "Assam lacks talented and capable people to establish industries" when claiming that the Centre was biased towards BJP ruled states. He was speaking on semiconductor industries being set up in Assam and Gujarat instead of City.

Assamese Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday called Priyank Kharge a "first-class idiot" and said, "He has insulted Assamese youth, and Congress has not yet condemned this. Perhaps, we might file a case against him because he has said that Assam does not have educated youth. It is an insult to the entire Assamese youth."

Assam State BJP spokesperson Jayanta Kumar Goswami asked Assam Pradesh Congress Committee President Gaurav Gogoiti ti condemn his party member's statement.

However, Priyank claimed that the BJP was "twisting" his words.

"After nearly a decade of BJP rule, Assam today ranks among the bottom five states in crucial development indicators like health, education and economic growth, as per NITI Aayog's latest report," he wrote on X. "The only thing Mr. Sarma has managed to grow is his own wealth… Instead of trying to whitewash his failures by giving my statements political spin, the CM should ask himself what he's done for the young people of his state. Why are they leaving Assam to find work elsewhere?" *—Agencies*

Kalaburagi to hold peace meet on 28 Oct over RSS march

KALABURAGI, 27 OCT

The Karnataka High Court has ordered the Kalaburagi district administration to hold a peace meeting over the RSS procession in Chittapur, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge's home constituency. The administration has issued notices to 10 organisations, including the RSS and the Bhim Army, asking them to come for the meeting on 28 Oct.

Hearing the petition filed by the RSS seeking permission to hold the procession in Chittapur, the High Court had instructed the district administration to conduct a peace meeting and submit a report before taking a final decision.

The Deputy Commissioner has directed that each organization may send up to three representatives, who must submit their written statements during the meeting.

The issue has become a battle for prestige. Soon after the RSS applied for permission to conduct its route march, 11 other organisations also sought permission to hold processions on the same day.

RSS leaders have insisted that "we will conduct the procession," but Priyank responded, "is the RSS greater than God?" *—Salar News*

2 hackers steal Rs 48 crore from finance firm's accounts

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Two individuals have been arrested for allegedly hacking into the bank accounts of a private finance firm, Whizdm Finance Pvt Ltd, and transferring Rs 48 crore through foreign IP addresses. The inquiry commenced after a senior manager filed a complaint at the cybercrime police station on 7 August, reporting suspicious unauthorised transactions from the company's accounts.

"The company's internal investigation revealed that these transactions were not conducted from its official systems or registered IP addresses. Instead, they originated from foreign IP addresses, with approximately Rs 47 crore illegally transferred to other accounts," said a senior police officer.

In total, 1,782 transactions were identified, involving transfers to 656 different bank accounts. Rs 27.39 lakh was traced to an SBI account belonging to one individual, arrested on 25 September.

"Further investigation revealed that Rs 5.5 crore was sent to a private firm in Hyderabad, later routed to an ICICI Bank account of another individual," police stated. The investigation uncovered that two Dubai residents had rented five servers used in the scheme. *—PTI*

City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh looks at how CCB cracked Whizdm Finance scam, on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

'POOR SERVICE STANDARDS'

Minister flags safety lapses in e-bus network

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has urged Union Heavy Industries Minister HD Kumaraswamy to review the performance of private operators managing electric buses under the Gross Cost Contract (GCC) model, citing 'safety lapses' and 'poor service standards' in City's e-mobility network.

In a letter dated 25 October, Reddy raised concerns over operators functioning under central schemes such as FAME II, CESL, Smart City, and Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023–24.

While lauding the green mobility initiative, Reddy said he wrote with pressing concern about "'operational inefficiency and lack of service discipline" among key operators like NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam, Tata Motors, Switch Mobility, and OHM Global Mobility.

BMTC currently operates 7,067 buses, including 1,644 electric **PHOTO: PTI**

He alleged these firms failed to address issues such as driver training gaps, poor maintenance, frequent breakdowns, and battery-related faults, leading to accidents and flash strikes. Reddy also noted operators were deploying only 1.9–2.0 staff per bus against the required 2.3, hurting BMTC's reputation. BMTC currently operates 7,067 buses, including 1,644 electric, running 65,000 daily trips. While diesel buses have an accident rate of 0.05 per lakh km, e-buses record 0.07, he added.

Reddy urged the Centre to conduct a performance audit of GCC operators under FAME II and CESL, focusing on safety compliance and driver training. He also recommended mandatory certified training protocols and a joint monitoring mechanism between Ministry and State Transport Utilities to ensure adherence to safety benchmarks. *—PTI*

Mangaluru cricket heritage book launched in Mysuru

MANGALURU, 26 OCT

The Mangaluru Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), in association with Art Kanara Trust, hosted the launch of the book "Red Cherries on the Canara Coast: The Story of Cricket in Mangaluru and Udupi" on Saturday at the Kodialguthu Centre for Art and Culture, Ballalbagh.

Speaking at the launch, former minister J Krishna Palemar reminisced about Mangaluru's cricketing legacy, saying the book "revives a forgotten heritage that deserves a place in every home." Veteran umpire Kasturi Balakrishna Pai, felicitated at the event, recalled decades of preserving scorecards and documents, vowing to continue his efforts to protect Nehru Maidan as a cricket ground. Author and Times of India's former associate editor Jayanth Kodkani traced the region's cricketing journey from colonial era to the present, noting that Mangaluru-Udupi region has produced stalwarts.

Author Jayanth Kodkani **PHOTO: SALAR**

The event also opened a week-long exhibition of rare archival photographs chronicling a century of cricket heritage along the Canara Coast, open to the public till 1 November, from 11am to 7pm. Copies of the book are available at a special price of Rs 700. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

WB govt transfers officers ahead of SIR announcement

KOLKATA, 27 OCT

Hours before the Election Commission's expected announcement of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the West Bengal government on Monday transferred over 200 senior officials, including 61 IAS and 145 WBCS officers. The reshuffle, one of the largest in recent times, covered ten district magistrates, several special secretaries, and senior officers from HIDCO, KMC and the Haldia Development Authority. Officials said the move was made before the EC's schedule, after which further transfers would be restricted. The opposition BJP accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of attempting to derail the voter roll revision, claiming it would expose fake entries, while the ruling Trinamool Congress calling it a routine administrative exercise.—*PTI*

UP govt to rename Mustafabad village as Kabirdham

LAKHIMPUR KHERI, 27 OCT

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said his government would move a proposal to rename Mustafabad village in Lakhimpur Kheri district as Kabirdham, claiming the change would restore its historical and cultural identity linked to Sant Kabir. Speaking at the Smriti Mahotsav Mela 2025, he said he was surprised that the village, which has no Muslim residents, bore its current name. Adityanath compared the move to previous renaming initiatives such as restoring Ayodhya and Prayagraj. He added that the state's "double-engine government" was focusing on developing religious and heritage sites across Uttar Pradesh. Public funds were being used for cultural rejuvenation, reflecting "civilisational pride and continuity." Such efforts reflect a sense of cultural pride, he said.—*PTI*

Pakistani drone drops 5 kgs heroin in Jammu

JAMMU, 27 OCT

Security forces on Monday foiled a major narcotics smuggling attempt along the International Border in Jammu, recovering over five kilograms of heroin worth more than Rs 25 crore, dropped by a Pakistani drone. Officials said the contraband was found near Border Outpost Jatinder in the RS Pura sector during a joint operation by the Border Security Force (BSF) and police. The search began after a drone was spotted crossing into Indian territory. A BSF spokesperson said two yellow packets containing suspected heroin were recovered from a farmland near Bidipur village. The incident is the latest in a series of drone-based smuggling attempts from across the border. A case was registered.—*PTI*

Join Run for Unity, honour Sardar Patel's vision: PM

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged citizens to participate in the Run for Unity on 31 October to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, describing him as the architect of a united India. In a post on X, Modi said the event symbolises national togetherness and honours Patel's vision of unity. Born on 31 October, 1875, Patel served as India's first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, playing a pivotal role in integrating over 500 princely states. His birth anniversary is observed as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day). Modi will lead the Unity Day parade at Gujarat's Kevadia. Similar events will take place nationwide.—*PTI*

Gandhis, Kharge among 40 star campaigners in Bihar

Poll campaign to kickstart in Bihar soon after Chhath Pooja

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Kanhaiya Kumar and Independent MP Pappu Yadav are among the party's 40 star campaigners for the first phase of the Bihar assembly polls.

The poll campaign in Bihar will kick off soon after Chhath Pooja. Rahul is scheduled to campaign in Bihar on 29 and 30 October.

The list will also feature AICC in-charge of Bihar Krishna Allavaru, Bihar Congress chief Rajesh Ram, Congress General Secretaries KC Venugopal, Bhupesh Baghel, Sachin Pilot, Randeep Surjewala and Syed Naseer Hussain, Ashok Gehlot, Tariq Anwar, Gaurav Gogoi, Mohammad Jawed and Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

Several Congress leaders are camping in Bihar to finetune the party's strategy, besides diffusing the crisis in its rank and file PHOTO: PTI

The Bihar Assembly polls will be held in two phases on 6 and 11 November, while results will be announced on 14 November.

The opposition INDIA bloc declared RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav its chief ministerial candidate for the Bihar polls.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, senior leaders Digvijaya Singh, Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, Meira Kumar, Charanjit Singh Channi, Alka Lamba, Pawan Khera, Imran Pratapgarhi, Shakeel Ahmed, Ranjeet Ranjan, Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, Anil Jaihind and Rajendra Pal Gautam will also campaign for the INDIA block in the state.

Meanwhile, several senior Congress leaders are camping in the poll-bound state to finetune the party's strategy, besides diffusing the crisis in its rank and file, which has come to the fore with many workers alleging that tickets were "put up for sale".

The Voter Adhikar Yatra in August gave the party the much-needed momentum in the state.

"A young politician always has the passion to work hard, realising that if he does not live up to the expectations of the people, he would be spoiling his career," Ghelot said about Tejashwi. —*PTI*

OPPOSITION PROTESTS

No issue between EC & states: CEC

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

As some opposition parties on Monday questioned the intentions of the Election Commission behind holding the second phase of special intensive revision of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said state governments must cooperate.

"There is no hurdle between the Election Commission and the state government. The Commission is doing its constitutional duty by carrying out the SIR, and the state government will discharge its constitutional duties," Kumar said during a press conference on Monday.

On the demands for putting off the SIR exercise in Kerala on account of local bodies elections, Kumar said the notification of the local bodies elections was yet to be issued.

However, the Congress said the poll body's intentions and credibility were under suspicion as neither the voters nor the opposition were satisfied with it.

In a post on X, he also asked whether Bihar has been turned into a "laboratory for murdering democracy through SIR".

"Is this round of SIR also just for vote-cutting?

In Bihar, the Election Commission has not taken any steps towards adding new voters, while 6.5 million votes have been cut," e Congress' media and publicity head, Pawan Khera said in a social media post.

The TMC in Bengal threatened to "democratically protest" the exercise, while the the ruling CPI(M) and the Opposition Congress in Kerala said that the move, coming just ahead of local body elections, could disrupt the democratic process. —*PTI*

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the 20th East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia PHOTO: PTI

EAM Jaishankar, Rubio hold discussions in Kuala Lumpur

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday held talks with his American counterpart Marco Rubio amid efforts by the two sides to reset bilateral ties that have come under severe strain over punitive US tariffs on Indian goods.

Jaishankar and Rubio met in Kuala Lumpur on the sidelines of the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The relations between New Delhi and Washington have turned sour after US President Donald Trump imposed 50 per cent tariffs on India including an additional 25 per cent levies for its procurement of Russian crude oil.

India described the US action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

Jaishankar and Rubio also broadly delved into the proposed trade pact between the two sides during the important meeting.

Five rounds of talks have been completed so far for the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement.

According to an official, the proposed trade deal is "very near" to concluding.

Jaishankar held separate talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and his Thai counterpart Sihasak Phuangketkeow on 26 October.

The 11-nation ASEAN is considered one of the most influential blocs in the region, with India and several other countries, including the US, China, Japan and Australia, being its dialogue partners.

Malaysia is hosting the ASEAN summit and related meetings in Kuala Lumpur in its capacity as the current chair of the grouping. —*PTI*

Great Nicobar to boost maritime trade: Shah

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has announced that the USD 5 billion Great Nicobar Island Development Project will significantly enhance India's maritime trade potential.

Speaking at the inauguration of India Maritime Week 2025 in Mumbai, Shah asserted, "The USD 5 billion Great Nicobar project will increase the maritime world trade many times."

Initiated in 2021, the project aims to transform Great Nicobar Island in the Bay of Bengal. Shah highlighted India's commitment to cooperation over competition, stating there are opportunities worth Rs 10 lakh crore in the maritime sector.

The Union Minister revealed plans to elevate India to among the top five nations in shipbuilding and triple cargo handling to 10,000 MMTPA through deep-draft port development. —*PTI*

Union Ministers Amit Shah and Sarbananda Sonowal at the 'India Maritime Week, 2025' in Mumbai on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Kangana gets bail in defamation case

BHATINDA, 27 OCT

Actor-politician Kangana Ranaut on Monday was granted bail in a defamation case by a court in Punjab's Bathinda, as she regretted the "misunderstanding" that arose following her social media post and said every 'mata' (mother) is respectable to her.

The court had directed the BJP MP from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh to be present in person and rejected her plea to appear via video conference.

The defamation case stems from the actor's retweet with her own comment on 73-year-old complainant, Mahinder Kaur of Bahadurgarh Jandian village in Punjab's Bathinda.

The comment was made during the 2020-21 farmer protests against the now-repealed farm laws.

She said that she had not commented against anyone. Kaur alleged that the BJP MP defamed her by identifying her wrongly as Bilkis Bano, an activist who took part in the Shaheen Bagh protest. —*PTI*

Flood-hit landless people in J&K to get lands

SRINAGAR, 27 OCT

The Jammu and Kashmir government has announced plans to provide five 'marlas' of land to landless individuals affected by the recent floods in the Union Territory.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah confirmed in the assembly that while no new rehabilitation policy has been formulated, "Landless people affected by the flood will be given five marlas on lease wherever available. The documentary process is on."

Abdullah reported that a federal team had assessed the flood's impact, with more damage found in Jammu than Kashmir. He stated, "We did the damage assessment and prepared a report for the Centre."

- "Landless people affected by the flood will be given five marlas on lease wherever available. The documentary process is on," Abdullah said.

Agriculture Minister Javed Dar revealed that the agricultural losses totalled Rs 209 crore.

He responded to PDP MLA Waheed Para's call for waiving Kisan Credit Card loans by asserting, "Total losses are 209 crore." —*PTI*

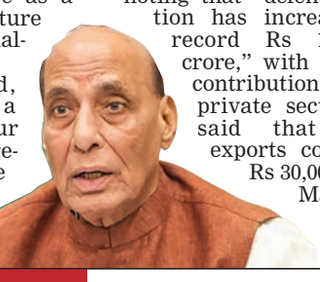
Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah speaks during a session of the Legislative Assembly in Srinagar PHOTO: PTI

Must be prepared for war-like situation: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India must remain prepared for a "war-like situation," particularly in light of the recent four-day military conflict with Pakistan in May.

Speaking at an event, Singh emphasised that Operation Sindoor should serve as a "case study" for future national security challenges.



He remarked, "Although we gave a firm response... our forces are fully prepared to defend the country's borders, we must continue to introspect."

Singh highlighted the successful use of indigenous military equipment during the conflict, stating, "The world witnessed the power of the Akash missile system... and other indigenous platforms."

He reiterated the importance of maintaining a robust domestic manufacturing base, noting that "defence production has increased to a record Rs 1.51 lakh crore," with significant contributions from the private sector. Singh said that defence exports could reach Rs 30,000 crore by March 2026. —*PTI*

Lalu Prasad Yadav and his wife Rabri Devi PHOTO: PTI

IRCTC scam: Lalu, wife file plea seeking time

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

A Delhi court on Monday sought a response from the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) after former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav and his wife Rabri Devi moved a plea seeking four weeks' time to prepare for the examination of witnesses in the alleged IRCTC scam case.

The court had framed charges against RJD chief Lalu Prasad and others for cheating and criminal conspiracy.

It had posted the matter to the stage of prosecution evidence, commencing with the examination of witnesses on from 27 October to 7 November.

The judge said that in view of the short time available between the framing of the charge and the commencement of evidence, the respective counsel would require time to prepare for cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses. The CBI requested that the proceedings be started on Monday.

Yadav's plea to defer the proceedings came in the midst of election campaigning in Bihar. —*PTI*

ONE MONTH LATER

Vijay apologises to stampede victims' kin

CHENNAI, 27 OCT

Actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) Chief Vijay on Monday met the families of the Karur stampede victims in Mahabalipuram near here and sought their forgiveness for the tragic incident that left 41 dead and over 60 injured.

A total of 37 families were brought in from Karur to a resort where the party had booked about 50 rooms.

Vijay assured the families monetary support, besides for education, self-employment and housing.

Vijay apologised for bringing them to Mahabalipuram and said he could not visit Karur for being unable to get permission from the authorities. He assured to visit Karur soon. Though he could never compensate for the loss of their dear ones, he would take care of the affected families as if they were his own, he said.

The huge crowd of people which had gathered in Karur in Tamil Nadu for the roadshow of TVK Chief Vijay on 27 September PHOTO: PTI

The family members of the victims were brought in five buses and were expected to be taken back to Karur.

The TVK leadership had earlier in the day instructed its cadres not to visit the resort.

Vijay was likely to resume his political outreach programme that was suspended due to the stampede.

Meanwhile, the Madras High Court on Monday directed the Tamil Nadu government to frame standard operating procedure (SOP) within 10 days for conducting public events including roadshows and rallies by political parties in the state.

The court gave the directive while hearing a batch of petitions, seeking various reliefs, filed in the wake of the 27 September 27 Karur stampede.

Additional advocate general J Ravindran said that no political party would be allowed to hold rallies and roadshows till the SOP was framed. But, they could from conducting public meetings. The AIADMK sought permission to file impleading petition in the case. —*PTI*

No contempt case against lawyer: SC

Apex court noted that the CJI himself refused to act against lawyer who hurled shoe at him

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to initiate contempt proceedings against advocate Rakesh Kishore, who had hurled a shoe at Chief Justice of India BR Gavai during court proceedings on 6 October, noting that the CJI himself refused to proceed against him.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi observed that while shouting slogans or throwing objects in court clearly amounts to contempt, the decision to act lies with the presiding judge.

"Issuing a contempt notice will only give undue importance to the lawyer and prolong the incident's life," the bench remarked, adding that it should be allowed to 'die its own natural death.'

The court was hearing a plea filed by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) seeking contempt action against the 71-year-old lawyer.

Following the outburst, the Bar Council of India had suspended Advoate Rakesh Kishore's licence with immediate effect.

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and Advocate Rakesh Kishore **PHOTO: PTI**

The bench also asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to compile details of similar disruptions or shoe-throwing incidents in courts took place across the country, indicating that the top court may consider framing guidelines to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Earlier, on 16 October, the Supreme court had cautioned against the dangers of unregulated use of social media and misuse of freedom of speech.

The SC termed such acts 'money-spinning ventures.'

CJI Gavai, who remained calm during the incident, instructed courtroom security to just ignore the act.

Gavai further said that let the lawyer off with a warning, a gesture widely praised across the legal fraternity and political spectrum. *—PTI*

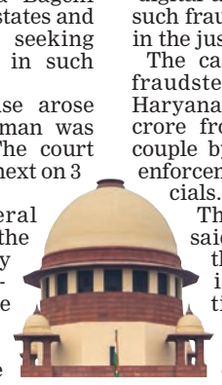
SC likely to assign 'digital arrest' cases to CBI

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday said it may assign the CBI to investigate 'digital arrest' scams, citing their nationwide spread and seriousness.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi issued notices to all states and Union Territories, seeking data on FIRs filed in such cases.

The suo motu case arose after an elderly woman was defrauded online. The court will hear the matter next on 3 November.



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that many cybercrimes originate from offshore hubs like Myanmar and Thailand.

The court asked the CBI to devise an action plan for a coordinated probe and specify if it needs more manpower or external cyber experts.

On 17 October, the apex court had flagged a surge in online scams involving fake judicial orders and fabricated 'digital arrests', warning that such frauds erode public trust in the justice system.

The case commenced after fraudsters in Ambala, Haryana, extorted Rs 1.05 crore from a senior citizen couple by impersonating law enforcement and court officials.

The Supreme Court said it would monitor the CBI's progress and issue further directions to ensure an effective, nationwide crackdown on such crimes. *—PTI*

Ashoka faculty seeks SC nod for passport release

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, booked in May over social media posts on Operation Sindoor, moved the Supreme Court seeking release of his passport. The court will hear his plea on 18 November. Haryana's ASG SV Raju said Mahmudabad could travel abroad after submitting his itinerary, while Kapil Sibal argued there was no reason to retain the passport. The SC earlier stayed trial in one case and the SIT closed another. *—PTI*

122 stuble burning cases reported in a day in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 27 OCT

Punjab reported 122 stubble-burning incidents on Sunday, the season's highest single-day spike, taking the total to 743 since 15 September, according to the Punjab Pollution Control Board. Tarn Taran (224) and Amritsar (154) recorded the most cases, followed by Ferozepur (80), Sangrur (47) and Patiala (39). Officials said farm fires have more than doubled since 20 October, despite repeated government appeals to curb the practice. The PPCB imposed fines worth Rs 16.8 lakh in 329 cases, recovering Rs 12 lakh, and registered 266 FIRs, along with 296 "red entries" in land records, barring offenders from loans or land sales. Officials added that 56 per cent of the 31.72 lakh hectares of paddy fields have been harvested, and the short sowing window for wheat continues to drive residue burning, worsening air quality across Punjab, and Delhi-NCR. *—PTI*

Man posing as army officer rapes doctor, arrested

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

A 27-year-old man who allegedly posed as an army lieutenant posted in Kashmir to deceive and rape a woman doctor working at a government hospital here after the two met through social media has been arrested. The accused, Aarav Malik, a resident of Chhattarpur in Delhi, worked as a delivery agent with an e-commerce platform. He had purchased the army uniform online and used the fake identity to mislead the complainant. Between 30 April and 27 September, Malik regularly communicated with her through Instagram and WhatsApp. Later, he visited her residence, offered her something to eat, and established physical relations with her. A case was registered against him. *—PTI*

Dubai-bound flight diverted after technical snag

CHENNAI, 27 OCT

A Dubai-bound private flight from Madurai was diverted here following a 'technical snag,' airport sources said. The 'snag' was detected mid-air and the flight with 160 passengers subsequently landed safely at the Chennai airport here, they added. No injuries were reported among the passengers. The technical problem was being examined to determine the cause of the snag, airport authorities said. A similar incident had occurred a few days ago when a Patna bound SpiceJet flight had to return to Delhi soon after take-off due to a technical glitch while flying. A Delhi- bound Air India flight also returned to Nagpur last week soon after taking off as the pilot reported a suspected bird-hit. The flight reported engine vibration. *—PTI*

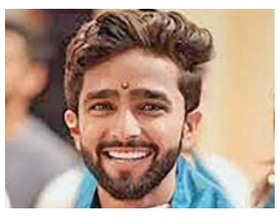


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

'Jamtara 2' actor Sachin Chandwade kills self at age 25

PUNE, 27 OCT

Marathi actor Sachin Chandwade, best known for his role in Netflix's Jamtara 2, has died by suicide at 25, shocking the Marathi and Hindi film industries. He was found hanging in his Pune flat on October 23 and was rushed to a private hospital. His condition deteriorated, and he was shifted to Dhule, where doctors declared him dead around 1.30am on 24 October. A software engineer by profession, Sachin worked at an IT park in Pune while pursuing his passion for acting. Friends and family remembered him as a determined and talented performer who had been passionate about acting since childhood.

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support. *—Agencies*

SC rebukes Delhi cops over Khalid, Imam bail pleas

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to grant two weeks' time to the Delhi Police for filing its reply to bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima, and Meeran Haider in the UAPA case linked to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 Delhi riots.

Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam **PHOTO: PTI**

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria told ASG SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police, that it had already been given sufficient time and fixed the hearing for 31 October. "In bail matters, there is no question of filing a counter," the bench remarked.

Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi argued that the petitioners have been jailed for over five years, and further delay would be unjust.

The activists have challenged the Delhi High Court's 2 September order denying bail to nine accused, including Khalid and Imam, ruling that conspiratorial violence under the guise of protest cannot be condoned.

The accused were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and IPC provisions for allegedly masterminding the riots during anti-CAA protests, which left 53 dead and over 700 injured. They maintain innocence and claim prolonged incarceration without trial violates their rights. *—PTI*

Cyclone Montha spurs mass evacuations

AMARAVATI, 27 OCT

The Andhra Pradesh government has gone on high alert as Cyclone Montha moves closer to the coast, expected to make landfall near Kakinada on 28 October evening as a severe cyclonic storm with winds up to 110kmph, according to the IMD.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh are overseeing 24x7 monitoring through the RTGS war room, coordinating with district collectors and central agencies. Over 400 relief camps have been set up, and NDRF, SDRF, and police teams have been fully deployed for evacuation and relief operations. Naidu ordered hourly tracking, advance flood prevention, and zero-casualty measures, directing immediate evacuation of residents in vulnerable coastal regions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Naidu to review preparedness, while IndiGo issued flight advisories for Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Rajahmundry, warning of disruptions and advising passengers to check schedules before travel.

Boats parked on a beach as a precautionary measure against Cyclone 'Montha' in Puri, Odisha **PHOTO: PTI**

2 DEAD AMID DOWNPOUR IN KERALA

Heavy rain and strong winds lashed Kerala, killing two, a fisherman in Alappuzha and a worker in Ernakulam struck by lightning. The IMD issued orange and yellow alerts across multiple districts, warning of continued intense rainfall and rough sea conditions.

In neighbouring Odisha, the government has begun mass evacuations across eight southern districts, deploying over 5,000 personnel from ODRAF, NDRF, and Fire Services.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said all arrangements were in place with a goal of zero casualty, including shelters, food, medical aid, and animal care. Schools and Anganwadi centres remain closed till October 30.

West Bengal is also bracing for heavy rainfall and possible landslides in hilly districts from Tuesday to Friday, sources said. *—Agencies*

VICTIM CHARRED TO DEATH

Live-in partner among 3 held for UPSC aspirant's murder

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Delhi Police have arrested three people, including the live-in partner of a 32-year-old UPSC aspirant, whose charred body was discovered earlier this month in his Gandhi Vihar flat.

Police said the 21-year-old woman, a forensic science student, plotted the murder with her former boyfriend and another associate, all from Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh. The victim, Ramkesh Meena, was allegedly strangled before the accused poured oil and liquor on his body and set the flat on fire to pass it off as an accident.

CCTV footage showed the suspects entering the building before the incident and leaving shortly before the blaze. The woman was traced after her phone location placed her at the scene and later confessed to the crime, claiming Meena had recorded obscene videos and refused to delete them.

Police have recovered a hard disk, phones, and other belongings from the accused, and said further investigations are in progress. *—PTI*

Victim Ramkesh Meena was allegedly strangled before being set ablaze by accused in Gandhi Vihar area in Delhi **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Delhi bans non-BS-VI vehicles starting 1 Nov

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

All commercial goods vehicles registered outside Delhi that fail to meet BS-VI emission standards will be barred from entering the capital from November 1, following directions from the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).

A public notice by the Delhi Transport Department stated that BS-IV diesel goods vehicles will be allowed entry only till 31 October, 2026, as a transitional measure.

The order seeks to curb vehicular pollution, one of Delhi's leading causes of poor air quality. BS-VI compliant vehicles, meeting stricter emission norms, are expected to reduce harmful pollutants significantly.

There will be no restrictions on Delhi-registered commercial vehicles, BS-VI diesel vehicles, or those running on CNG, LNG, or electricity, the department clarified.

However, restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) will continue to apply whenever any stage is invoked to tackle rising pollution.

At its 17 October meeting, the CAQM approved the ban as part of broader efforts to limit emissions from heavy vehicles, particularly during the winter months when smog levels surge.

The Transport Department will issue detailed guidelines for implementation and coordinate with neighbouring states to ensure compliance at all entry points.

Experts have welcomed the move as a vital step toward cleaner air and sustainable mobility, urging authorities to also strengthen public transport. *—PTI*

US deports 54 H'yana men for taking 'donkey route'

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The US has deported 54 youths from Haryana for illegally entering via the 'Donkey Route.' They landed at Delhi's IGI Airport on flight OAE-4767, police said. Of them, 16 were from Karnal, 15 from Kaithal, and others from Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Jind, Sonipat, Panchkula, Panipat, Rohtak, and Fatehabad.

Most are aged 25 - 40 and have been handed over to their families. Karnal DSP Sandeep Kumar confirmed no agent complaints were received and warned against illegal migration. Police are verifying criminal backgrounds.

Separately, Haryana's STF arrested Lakhwinder Singh alias Lakha, a close aide of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, deported from the US after legal proceedings. Singh, from Kaithal, was wanted in over a dozen extortion and firing cases in Haryana and Punjab.

The STF, with international coordination, ensured his deportation under Red Corner and Look Out Notices issued in 2023–24. *—ANI*

India–China direct flights resume after four years

KOLKATA, 27 OCT

Direct air services between India and mainland China will resume on Sunday after a four-year suspension, with IndiGo operating the first flight from Kolkata to Guangzhou at 10pm.

Flights between the two countries were halted in early 2020 following the outbreak of Covid-19 and a subsequent downturn in relations after the Galwan clashes.

IndiGo Chief Executive Pieter Elbers said the airline was pleased to relaunch nonstop services, noting that restored air connectivity would strengthen travel, trade, business and cultural exchanges between two of the world's most populous nations.

Before the pandemic, more than 500 direct flights operated monthly between India and China, but travellers have since depended on connecting routes through Southeast Asian hubs.

IndiGo operates the first flight to Guangzho **PHOTO: X**

The resumption follows a recent agreement between the China government and the Government of India, announced by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The agreement is expected to facilitate further expansion of direct air links in the coming months. *—Agencies*

AI MISUSE

Faridabad student blackmailed with AI pics of 3 sisters kills self

FARIDABAD, 27 OCT

A 19-year-old college student in Haryana's Faridabad died by suicide after being allegedly blackmailed with AI-generated obscene photos and videos of his three sisters, police said on Sunday.

The victim, Rahul Bharti, a second-year student at DAV College, had been distressed for two weeks after an unidentified person hacked his phone and created explicit visuals using artificial intelligence, his father Manoj Bharti told police.

Investigations found that a man named 'Sahil' had been threatening Rahul via WhatsApp, demanding Rs 20,000 and warning that the visuals would be made viral if he failed to pay. Screenshots showed multiple calls and messages, including one urging him to meet and another allegedly inciting him to die by suicide.

On Saturday evening, Rahul consumed poison at home. His family rushed him to a private hospital, where he died during treatment.

"Someone sent obscene photos and videos of my daughters to Rahul and threatened to leak them online. He was mentally tortured," his father said.

Rahul's mother, Meena Devi, accused her brother-in-law Neeraj Bharti of conspiring in the extortion along with a woman, claiming prior family disputes.

Faridabad **PHOTO: X**

Police have registered a case against two suspects based on the complaint lodged by the victim's family member.

Investigating Officer Sunil Kumar said the victim's mobile phone is being examined and further action will follow based on digital evidence. Old Faridabad Police Station in-charge Vishnu Kumar termed it a "serious case of cybercrime and AI misuse." Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support. *—Agencies*

DELHI HOLDS ITS BREATH

People walk near India Gate amid low visibility caused by worsening air quality, in New Delhi. The quality of air across the state has been deteriorating post Deepavali celebration, with most areas covered in smog. Delhi's AQI remains in 'very poor' category, putting people's health at risk. Reports suggest that only 11 of 39 stations recorded air quality on Deepavali night

PHOTO: PTI

₹92Kcr Great Nicobar project is exploitative, say experts

Over 70 scientists, environmentalists and former bureaucrats on Monday urged the government to reconsider the Rs 92,000 crore Great Nicobar Island project, claiming that it is "an exploitative commercial proposal" being "wrongly portrayed as a strategic defence project".

The mega infrastructure project, titled Holistic Development of Great Nicobar, involves the construction of a transhipment port, an international airport, a township and a power plant over more than 160 square km of land.

This includes around 130 square km of pristine forest inhabited by the Nicobarese, a Scheduled Tribe (ST), and the Shompens, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), whose population is estimated to be between 200 and 300.

In a detailed letter to Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, the signatories said it was "disingenuous to label what is essentially a commercial project as a strategic one and invoke national security whenever questions on the project are raised".

They cautioned that the massive diversion of forest land and displacement of indigenous communities due to the project would cause "grave and irreversible" ecological and social damage.

"The only component of the proposed project that was made defence-related, and that too after the public hearing, is the dual-use military-cum-civilian airport," the letter said.

"The remaining 160 square km, including 130.75 square km of rainforest and 2.98 square km of sea, proposed to be reclaimed, is being done for a commercial transhipment port, an associated power plant and a sprawling township."

The signatories to the letter said the township alone would house 3.5 lakh people, over 40 times the island's current population of about 8,000, and occupy more than 80 per cent of the project area.

The site plan for the Great Nicobar project worth Rs 92,000 crore ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

- On the social impact, the signatories claimed that the project would result in the third displacement of the island's indigenous communities.

"This will likely become a liability rather than an asset for the nation," they warned.

The group said the project involves diverting 15 per cent of Great Nicobar Island's forest area, including about a million rainforest trees. They said the 1.82 per cent figure cited by the minister was "mathematically accurate but ecologically misleading".

The forests of Great Nicobar are "our country's last remaining old-growth forest" and "the only home to approximately 24 per cent of all species found there", the letter said.

Raising questions about the project's economic rationale, the signatories to the letter alleged that its viability had not been demonstrated.

On the social impact, the signatories claimed that the project would result in the third displacement of the island's indigenous communities.

"Since the tsunami of 2004, the Great Nicobarese have remained internally displaced citizens on their own island... Why does the country only take land away from the most marginalised of its citizens?" they asked.

The letter highlighted that the island continues to lack basic facilities such as proper roads, healthcare, teachers and regular transport.

Refuting the minister's statement that tribal policies had been fully respected, they alleged, "This statement is far from true. The rights accorded to the indigenous communities under the Forest Rights Act have been violated. Even the provisions under the ANPAT Regulation (1956) and the Shompen Policy (2015) have been wholly ignored in the rush to grant clearances."

The signatories alleged that the Environmental Appraisal Committee ignored anthropological and ecological objections and that "Galathea wildlife sanctuary was denotified, and three new sanctuaries were notified without any consultation with the Great and Little Nicobar islanders".

They described the move as a "hollow exercise intended solely to satisfy Environmental Clearance conditions for enabling the project".

The letter also claimed a "glaring conflict of interest" in the involvement of government institutes in both preparing and monitoring the environmental management plans.

"It does not inspire confidence when the very institutions that have prepared management plans will be monitoring their implementation," they wrote, adding that "a few scientists from these institutes have said they were pressured to prepare reports in favour of the project".

They urged the environment minister to set aside political considerations, focus on the grave and irreversible negative implications of the proposed project and take serious note of the need to reconsider it.

The signatories include Padma Bhushan Ramachandra Guha, Padma Shri Romulus Whitaker, wildlife biologist Ravi Chellam, nature conservationist Asad Rahmani, scientist Sharachchandra Lele, and former Gujarat PCCF Ashok Kumar Sharma, among others. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Lalu's eldest son faces tough battle in Mahua

A piquant multi-cornered contest is underway in Mahua assembly constituency of Bihar, where people believe they will be voting for their beloved party, represented by the sitting MLA, even if they backed a rebel.

"Clarified butter shall always fall in the lentil soup", is a common refrain here from die-hard RJD supporters, who insist that even if they voted for Tej Pratap Yadav, who was expelled by his father and founding President Lalu Prasad, it will "still benefit the party".

The party's official candidate from the Vaishali district seat is sitting MLA Mukesh Raushan.

"Dal ghee mein hi girta hai" is a loose translation of the adage blood is thicker than water they attribute to Yadav's mother Rabri Devi, a former chief minister, who is rumoured to be secretly rooting for her elder son.

This has bewildered Raushan, who has been trying hard to convince the electorate that they must cast their vote in his favour if they want Tejashwi Yadav, who aims at a hattrick in neighbouring Raghopur, to become the chief minister.

The Raghopur MLA, who is the RJD supremo's younger son and heir apparent, has been named the chief ministerial candidate of the INDIA bloc, electrifying Yadav voters, including those in Mahua, where the community has a sizeable population.

Notably, the constituency had, in 2015, elected Tej on his debut, but he was made to shift to Hasanpur in Samastipur district five years later, allegedly because a decline in popularity had made the seat "unsafe" for him.

The immediate trigger for Prasad disowning his elder son was a social media post in which the latter indiscreetly admitted to being "in a relationship for 12 years" with a woman, even though his divorce petition was still pending before the court.

But political observers feel that he irked father and younger brother alike a few months earlier when he announced that he would be "returning to Mahua", causing Raushan, a Tejashwi loyalist, to burst into sobs.

Known to be of volatile temperament, the 37-year-old, who has since floated his own outfit Janshakti Janata Dal, has hit the campaign trail with aplomb, even as his proclamations of "choosing death over return to that party (RJD)", is met with disbelief by the man on the street.

Tej believes that he would pull off a victory by virtue of the "good work" he did as the local MLA and claims that, despite his pedigree, he was more accessible to the public than the incumbent is.

He also claims credit for the medical college, which he got sanctioned for his constituency while he was the health minister and promises, if elected again, "an international cricket stadium which would host an India-Pakistan match will be built".

Locals are not incredulous as they say, "he is a man of action. The medical college is a reality. It is another thing that it does not have any faculty or hospital beds, and the gates of the massive structure remain locked".

However, what makes the battle really challenging for Tej is the multipolarity of the contest in Mahua where he may not enjoy the full support of the Muslim-Yadav ('MY') combine that makes his father's party such a formidable force despite having been out of power for two decades.

Tej votes are likely to be split between Tej and Raushan. On the other hand, Muslims, who are backing INDIA bloc across the state, might be a divided lot in Mahua, unless unforeseen circumstances lead to a consolidation in favour of either Tej, Raushan, or Ashma Parveen, an Independent candidate.

Parveen, 50, is a doctor by qualification and said to be a close friend of Misa Bharti, the eldest daughter of the RJD President. Her father, Ilyas Hussain, is a senior RJD leader and former state minister. She was the runner-up in Mahua 2020 when she contested on a ticket of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), polling close to 50,000 votes.

The ruling NDA is represented in Mahua by Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), headed by Union Minister Chirag Paswan, of whose parliamentary constituency Mahua is a part.

Paswan has reposed his trust in Sanjay Singh, the LJP candidate of 2020, when the latter had finished a distant third and lost his deposit. As Rajput, Singh is expected to garner a major chunk of the upper caste votes and so the possibility of him emerging as the proverbial dark horse cannot be ruled out in a four-cornered contest.

Altogether 15 candidates are in the fray in the assembly constituency where their fate will be decided by over 2.95 lakh voters on 6 November, in the first phase of assembly polls. *—PTI*

Tej Pratap Yadav's votes are likely to be split between him and RJD's official candidate from the Vaishali district seat MLA Mukesh Raushan ***PHOTO: PTI***

Next CJI Surya Kant's 2-decade-long career marks many key verdicts

Justice Surya Kant, who is set to take oath as the 53rd chief justice of India, brings to the top judicial office a wealth of experience spanning two decades on the bench, marked by landmark verdicts and orders on abrogation of Article 370, Bihar electoral roll revision, Pegasus spyware case, corruption and gender equality.

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on Monday recommended to the Centre the name of Justice Surya Kant as the next CJI.

Justice Kant, the senior-most judge, is set to become the chief justice of India on 24 November after CJI Gavai's retirement.

He became a top court judge on 24 May, 2019, and once appointed, he will have a tenure of nearly 15 months as the CJI till his retirement on 9 February, 2027.

Born on 10 February, 1962, in Hisar district of Haryana to a middle-class family, Justice Kant went from being a small-town lawyer to the country's highest judicial office, where he has been part of several verdicts and orders of national importance and constitutional matters.

He also has the distinction of standing 'first class first' in his Master's degree in law in 2011 from Kurukshetra University.

Justice Kant, who penned several notable judgments in the Punjab and Haryana HC, was appointed the chief justice of Himachal Pradesh HC on 5 October, 2018. In 2019, he was appointed a judge in the Supreme Court.

His tenure as an SC judge is marked by verdicts on the abrogation of Article 370, free speech and citizenship rights.

Justice Kant was part of the recent presidential reference on the powers of the governor and president in dealing with bills passed by a state assembly. The verdict is keenly awaited, with ramifications across many states.

He was part of the bench that kept the colonial-era sedition law in abeyance, directing that no new FIRs be registered under it until a government review.

Justice Kant also nudged the Election Commission to disclose the details of 65 lakh voters excluded from the draft electoral rolls in Bihar while hearing a batch of petitions challenging the poll panel's decision to undertake special intensive revision of the electoral roll in the poll-bound state.

In an order that emphasised grassroots democracy and gender justice, he led a bench that reinstated a woman sarpanch unlawfully removed from office and called out the gender bias in the matter.

He is also credited with directing that one-third of seats in bar associations, including the Supreme Court Bar Association, be reserved for women.

Justice Kant was part of the bench that appointed a five-member committee headed by former top court Justice Indu Malhotra to probe the security breach during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab in 2022, saying such matters required "a judicially trained mind".

He also upheld the One Rank-One Pension scheme for defence forces, calling it constitutionally valid, and continues to hear petitions of women officers in the armed forces seeking parity in permanent commission.

In another notable case, he upheld the Char Dham project in Uttarakhand, emphasising its strategic importance for national security, while balancing environmental concerns. His bench observed that "freedom of speech is not a licence to flout societal norms" while cautioning podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia for "derogatory" remarks.

Justice Kant led a bench which pulled up several stand-up comedians, including "India's Got Latent" host Samay Raina, for ridiculing disabled people on their shows and directed the Centre to come up with guidelines for regulating online content.

He also directed the Centre to draft guidelines for online content regulation after comedians were found mocking persons with disabilities.

- Justice Kant, the senior-most judge, is set to become the chief justice of India on 24 November after CJI Gavai's retirement.

Holding that freedom of speech is not absolute, Justice Kant led a bench which pulled up Madhya Pradesh minister Vijay Shah for his remarks targeting Col Sofiya Qureshi, who gained nationwide prominence for media briefings on 'Operation Sindoor', saying every word uttered by a minister has to be with a sense of responsibility.

He has repeatedly underscored that corruption undermines governance and public trust.

In a 2023 verdict, he called it a "serious societal threat" and ordered the CBI to probe 28 cases exposing an "unholy nexus between banks and developers" that defrauded homebuyers.

He also led a bench that granted bail to former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in CBI's excise policy case, remarking that the agency must work to dispel the notion of being a 'caged parrot'.

His bench flagged the absence of a legal framework for domestic workers, directing the Centre to form an expert committee to propose protections for this vulnerable workforce.

In another important verdict, he cautioned courts to be "mindful of collateral privacy infringements" when ordering DNA tests in paternity disputes.

He has been part of over 300 benches since his elevation to the Supreme Court, contributing to jurisprudence across criminal, constitutional, and administrative law.

Justice Kant was also on the seven-judge bench that overruled the 1967 AMU verdict, opening the way for reconsideration of its minority status.

He was also part of the bench which in 2021 appointed a 3-member panel of cyber experts to probe the alleged use of Israeli spyware Pegasus for surveillance of certain people in India, saying that the state cannot get a "free pass" every time the spectre of national security is raised and it cannot be the "bugbear" that the judiciary shies away from.

When he assumes office as CJI, he will face the daunting task of addressing a backlog of around 90,000 cases. *—PTI*

Justice Surya Kant; Chief Justice of India BR Gavai ***PHOTO: PTI***

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

10 people on trial for calling Brigitte Macron a man

PARIS, 27 OCT

Ten people go on trial in Paris for sexist cyber-harassment of Brigitte Macron over false claims she was assigned male at birth, on Monday. The defendants, aged 41 to 60, face up to two years in prison for malicious comments about the French first lady's gender and sexuality. The trial follows a complaint filed in August 2024 that led to arrests last December and February. The Macrons also filed a US defamation lawsuit in July against Conservative podcaster Candace Owens, who produced a series claiming Brigitte was born male. A spokesperson of Brigitte has said that her tax records were hacked in 2024, changing her name to Jean-Michel. *—Agencies*

4 killed in Cameroon protests over poll results

YAOUNDE, 27 OCT

At least four protesters died during clashes with security forces in Cameroon as opposition supporters demanded credible results from the recent Presidential election, officials confirmed Sunday. Hundreds took to the streets in multiple cities following calls by opposition candidate Issa Tchiroma Bakary, who claims victory over President Paul Biya in the 12 October election. The governor of the Littoral Region, which includes the economic hub of Douala, reported four deaths and several injured officers after protesters attacked security forces and police stations. Videos showed tear gas deployed against demonstrators. Cameroon's constitutional council announces final results on Monday, though the opposition alleges vote-rigging. The 92-year-old Biya, the world's oldest leader, faces anger from youth. *—PTI*

Ex-Madagascar Prez stripped of citizenship

JOHANNESBURG, 27 OCT

Ex-Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina has been stripped of his citizenship following his overthrow in a military coup this month. Rajoelina, who fled the nation after protests, remains in hiding. He also holds French citizenship. New Prime Minister Herintsalama Rajaonarivelo signed a decree invoking laws that revoke citizenship from Madagascans holding dual nationality. Rajoelina's French passport had sparked debate over his eligibility in 2023 Presidential polls, which he won. Youth-led protests against water and electricity shortages evolved into wider discontent over poverty and no jobs. Security forces' crackdown killed 22. Colonel Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as President. *—PTI*

Mali shuts schools as jihadists choke fuel supplies

BAMAKO, 27 OCT

Mali has closed all schools and universities for two weeks due to severe fuel shortages caused by a jihadi blockade imposed on the capital. Education Minister Amadou Sy Savane announced the suspension on state television, citing disruptions affecting staff movement. Al-Qaida-linked militants banned fuel imports from neighbouring countries in early September, crippling the landlocked nation's economy. Long queues snake outside Bamako's petrol stations whilst commodity prices and transport costs soar. The blockade represents a major blow to Mali's military junta, which seized power in 2020, promising to end the country's security crisis. Authorities aim to restore supplies before classes resume on 10 November. *—PTI*

Yunus gifts Pak map with India's Northeast in B'desh

Hints at 'Greater Bangladesh' idea; experts flag 'psy-war'

DHAKA, 26 OCT

Bangladesh Interim Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus gave Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza a map which showed parts of India's North East inside Bangladesh during their meeting on Saturday.

Yunus posted on his X an image of him giving the book 'Art of Triumph: Bangladesh's new dawn' to Mizra featuring a distorted map showing Assam and other North Eastern states in Bangladesh. While the book was seen as an ode to the 2024 student movement which toppled the

The image of the gift, which was shared on Yunus' official X account shows a book titled 'Art of Triumph: Bangladesh's new dawn' - which can be seen as an ode to the 2024 student movement.

However, the imagery also echoes the "Greater Bangladesh" narrative propagated by fringe Islamist groups claiming parts of India's Northeast.

Bangladesh Interim Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus with Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza *PHOTO: X*

Senior Indian intelligence officials described it as a "psy-war signal" and a deliberate symbolic move to undermine India's territorial integrity.

- The image of the gift shows a book titled 'Art of Triumph: Bangladesh's new dawn' - an ode to the 2024 student movement. The map echoes the "Greater Bangladesh" narrative propagated by fringe Islamist groups claiming parts of India's Northeast

During the meeting, Islamabad and Dhaka also agreed deepen their ties.

The statement adds Yunus's National Security Adviser and ex-diplomat Khalilur Rahman, Senior Secretary and SDG Coordinator Lamiya Morshed, and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider were present during the meeting. *—Salar News*

Russia's Defence Ministry said it had downed 193 Ukrainian drones overnight *PHOTO: TASS*

Ukraine drone strikes force Russia to close airports

MOSCOW/KYIV, 27 OCT

Ukraine launched a major drone attack on Moscow overnight on 26-27 October, prompting the closure of two of the city's four airports, Russian authorities said on Monday.

Russia's Defence Ministry said Monday it had downed 193 Ukrainian drones overnight, with local authorities reporting that one person was killed and five others injured. Russian forces downed 47 drones in Bryansk, as well as 40 in the Moscow region, with most of those headed towards the capital, the Defence Ministry said.

"Last night, air defence systems intercepted and destroyed 193 Ukrainian fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicles," the ministry wrote on Telegram.

A non-residential building was damaged after drones were shot down in the Oryol Region; there were no casualties, Governor Andrey Klychkov said on Telegram.

> **(Russian President Vladimir Putin) ought to get the war (in Ukraine) ended. A war that should have taken one week is now soon in its fourth year. That's what he ought to do instead of testing missiles... We test missiles all the time**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President on Russia's Burevestnik nuclear missile

Kyiv said its attacks targeted Russian infrastructure crucial to Moscow's military operations in Ukraine.

'CEASEFIRE PLAN IN 10 DAYS'

Ukraine will work on a ceasefire proposal in the next 10 days with its allies, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

"We decided we will work on it in the next week or ten days," he told Axios in an interview published on Monday. This comes after US President Donald Trump said that fighting should be stopped on the current battle lines. *—Salar News*

Trump meets Japan emperor, to meet PM

TOKYO, 26 OCT

President Donald Trump began his Japan visit on Monday with a meeting with Emperor Naruhito at the Imperial Palace, where the two spoke for about 30 minutes. The meeting precedes Trump's talks with Japan's newly appointed Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, who hopes to build a personal rapport to ease trade tensions.

Takaichi, Japan's first woman prime minister and a protégé of the late Shinzo Abe, plans gestures to please Trump, including possibly purchasing Ford F-150 trucks, though their size makes them impractical for Japan's narrow streets. "She has good taste," Trump said aboard Air Force One, calling it 'a hot truck.'

The visit is seen as an early diplomatic test for Takaichi, who leads a fragile coalition. Both leaders are expected to discuss trade, investments,

Donald Trump and Sanae Takaichi *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

and coordination against China's manufacturing dominance ahead of Trump's meeting with Xi Jinping in South Korea later this week.

Japan previously pledged USD 550 billion in US investments, prompting Trump to reduce tariffs on Japanese goods. Following his Tokyo visit, Trump will address U.S. troops aboard the USS George Washington and attend a business dinner before departing for Seoul. Trump also said he remains open to meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un if possible. *— PTI*

All personnel involved were rescued and are in stable condition *PHOTO: X*

Two US military aircraft crash in South China Sea

HAWAII, 27 OCT

A US Navy helicopter and a fighter jet crashed separately in the South China Sea on Sunday during routine operations, the US Navy's Pacific Fleet confirmed. All personnel involved were rescued and are in stable condition, it said.

A MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter from the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN-68) went down around 2:45 p.m. local time while conducting operations. All three crew members were safely recovered by Carrier Strike Group 11 search and rescue teams.

About 30 minutes later, a F/A-18F Super Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 22 also crashed in the same waters. Both pilots ejected safely and were rescued.

The cause is under probe.

The South China Sea remains a flashpoint, with overlapping territorial claims from China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. Beijing continues to fortify disputed islands despite global protests.

The crashes came amid President Donald Trump's Asia tour, ahead of his planned meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in South Korea. The US sees naval operations in the region as key to ensuring freedom of navigation and countering Beijing's maritime expansion. *—ANI*

Pakistan kills 25 terrorists at Afghan border

PESHAWAR, 27 OCT

Pakistan security forces gunned down 25 terrorists, including four suicide bombers, while preventing two major infiltration attempts from neighbouring Afghanistan in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

Five security personnel were also killed in clashes with the terrorists, the media wing said in a statement.

The security forces seized a large cache of weapons and explosives in both operations conducted in North Waziristan and Kurram districts on Friday night.

Security forces detected movements of two large groups of terrorists attempting to infiltrate Pakistan from Afghanistan near Ghaki in Kurram District and Spinwam in North Waziristan District.

Five security personnel were also killed in clashes with the terrorists *PHOTO: X*

The statement said that the troops "effectively engaged these groups" of terrorists, killing "fifteen khwarij, including four suicide bombers belonging to Fitna al Khwarij."

The Pakistan government last year notified the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as "Fitna al-Khawarij", a reference to a group in earlier Islamic history which was involved in violence.

- The security forces seized a large cache of weapons and explosives in both operations conducted in North Waziristan and Kurram districts on Friday night

'PAK-AFGHAN PEACE TALKS DEADLOCKED'

A deadlock continued on Sunday at the Pakistan-Afghanistan talks in Istanbul, as the Afghan Taliban delegation remained hesitant to commit to "verifiable measures" against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups said to be operating from within Afghanistan, Dawn reported. *—Agencies*

Milei wins Argentina's midterm elections

ÇBUENOS AIRES, 27 OCT

Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei achieved significant victories in key districts during the midterm elections on Sunday, securing a vital endorsement for his radical free-market agenda bolstered by support from the Trump administration. His party, La Libertad Avanza, garnered over 40 per cent of the vote in elections to renew almost half of the lower house of Congress, outpacing the left-leaning populist Peronism, which received just 31 per cent, its worst performance in years.

Milei announced that his party expanded its representation from 37 seats to 101 in the lower house and gained 14 additional seats in the Senate, totalling 20. "The Argentine people left decadence behind and opted for progress," he declared at party headquarters, celebrating the results.

Despite the electoral significance, voter turnout was notably low at just under 68 per cent, the lowest since Argentina's return to democracy in 1983. Milei's government, facing challenges from austerity measures and high inflation, now appears more capable of implementing his ambitious tax and labour reforms. *—PTI*

A NATION FRACTURED

Paramilitary seizes last army stronghold in Sudan

CAIRO, 27 OCT

Notorious paramilitaries said they had seized a headquarters in the centre of the besieged provincial capital of North Darfur, the Sudanese military's last stronghold in Darfur.

As fighting continued to rage on Monday in el-Fasher, a medical group said the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had killed dozens of civilians and destroyed health care infrastructure the previous day in the city, where hundreds of thousands of people have been trapped for more than a year.

Losing the 6th Division base is a major setback to the military and its allies. Fighting was continuing Monday morning around the airfield of the base, as well as on the western side of the city, according to Resistance Committees in el-Fasher, a grassroots group tracking the war. The group criticised the military for what it said was a lack of air support to troops trying to fend off the RSF attacks.

Military officials confirmed that troops vacated the base on Sunday and retreated to another defence line under heavy shelling and artillery attacks from the paramilitaries.

The Sudan Doctor Network described the RSF attack as a "heinous massacre" saying the fighters rampaged through parts of el-Fasher, looting hospitals and other medical facilities and "destroying what remained of essential life-supporting and health care infrastructure".

The Darfur Network for Human Rights reported that the RSF detained over 1,000 civilians after their capture of the base.

Among the detained was a local journalist, who was one of the few journalists remaining in the city, according to the Sudanese Journalists Union. The group warned about potential "mass violations" in el-Fasher, similar to what happened in another Darfur city in 2023 when RSF fighters ran riot there, killing hundreds of people and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

Tom Fletcher, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator called for "safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access".

Before Sunday's attack, there were 2,60,000 civilians, half of them children, trapped inside the city living in "desperate conditions," according to the UN children's agency. Between 2,500 and 3,000 people were forced to flee their homes due to the latest fighting.

The city is the military's last stronghold in the Darfur region and has been at the epicentre of fighting for over a year between the Sudanese military and the RSF – allegedly funded by the UAE and Libya -which grew out of the notorious Janjaweed Arab militias that brutalised the Sudanese during the Darfur conflict in the 2000s. *—PTI*

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had killed dozens of civilians and destroyed health care infrastructure. Losing the 6th Division base is a major setback to the military and its allies *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

40,000 PEOPLE

have been killed in the war since 2023, which created one the world's worst humanitarian crisis, the UN said. Part of the country has plunged into famine. 14 million people have fled their homes.

Netherlands heads to polls in snap elections

THE HAGUE, 27 OCT

The Netherlands is heading to the polls again in a snap election triggered by anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders, less than two years after his party's stunning victory. Wilders, who has lived under constant protection for two decades due to death threats, withdrew his Party for Freedom ministers from a fractious four-party ruling coalition over disputes regarding his stringent immigration policies.

Campaigning has focused on immigration, with even centrist parties shifting rightward in response to Wilders' popularity. "The Netherlands has become one big asylum-seekers centre," Wilders argued at a televised debate. Major parties have ruled out coalition with him, prompting Henri Bontenbal, leader of the Christian Democrats, to assert that Wilders' party "do not defend democracy." *—PTI*

Gold prices down by Rs 700 to Rs 1.25 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Gold prices declined by Rs 700 to Rs 1,25,900 per 10g in the national capital on Monday, tracking weak global trends as easing US-China trade tensions dented safe-haven demand. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal had climbed Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,26,600 per 10g on Saturday. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also fell by Rs 700 to Rs 1,25,300 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 1,26,000 per 10g in the previous session. In the local bullion market, silver prices slumped sharply by Rs 4,250 to Rs 1,51,250 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday. In the overseas markets, spot gold extended the losses for the second straight day, by dropping $97.86, or 2.38 per cent to $4,015.55 per ounce. Spot silver was quoted 2.03 per cent lower at $47.60 an ounce in overseas markets. —*PTI*

Rupee slumps by 43P, closes at 88.26 against USD

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

The rupee plunged 43 paise to close at 88.26 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, as broad strength in crude oil prices and month-end dollar demand from importers weighed on investor sentiment. Forex traders said the rally in crude oil prices was driven by a potential US-China trade deal, which supports expectations for a stronger global oil demand. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.87 against the greenback and fell to an intra-day low of 88.31 and a high of 87.86. It finally closed the day at 88.26 (provisional) against the greenback, down 43 paise from its previous close. Meanwhile, the dollar index was trading 0.08 per cent lower at 98.86. —*PTI*

Studds IPO aims to raise ₹455 cr; opens on 30 Oct

DUBAI, 30 OCT

Helmet maker Studds Accessories Ltd plans to raise Rs 455 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), opening on 30 October and closing on 3 November. The price band is set between Rs 557 and Rs 585 per share, valuing the company at around Rs 2,300 crore at the upper range. Founded in 1975, Studds manufactures helmets and accessories under the Studds and SMK brands, exporting to over 70 countries and supplying leading OEMs. The issue will be managed by IIFL Capital Services & ICICI Securities, with listing expected on 7 November. —*PTI*

Boeing workers strike at 3 plants over latest contract

MISSOURI, 27 OCT

Boeing workers at three Midwest plants where military aircraft and weapons are developed voted Sunday to reject the company's latest contract offer and to continue a strike that started almost three months ago. The strike, by about 3,200 machinists at the plants in the Missouri cities of St Louis and St Charles, and in Mascoutah, Illinois, is smaller in scale than a walkout last year by 33,000 Boeing workers who assemble commercial jetliners but threatens to complicate the aerospace company's progress in regaining its financial footing. Negotiations escalated over the summer in the days leading up to the strike, with the workers rejecting an earlier proposed agreement that included a 20 per cent wage hike. Boeing's Defence, Space and Security business accounts for more than one-third of the firm's revenue. —*PTI*

SC tells Centre to rethink VI's ₹5,606 crore AGR dues

The government now holds 49% equity shares in Vodafone

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

In a significant development, the Supreme Court on Monday permitted the Centre to reconsider and reconcile Vodafone Idea Ltd's pending adjusted gross revenue dues amounting to Rs 5,606 crore for the financial year 2016–17, observing that the issue falls within the policy domain of the government.

Adjusted gross revenue (AGR) is the income figure used to calculate the licence fees and spectrum charges that telecom companies must pay to the government.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran passed the order while hearing a writ petition filed by Vodafone Idea challenging fresh AGR-related demands raised by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

The telco contended that these additional claims were unsustainable as the liabilities had already been crystallised by the apex court's 2019 judgment on AGR dues.

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, informed the court that the government now holds 49 per cent equity in Vodafone Idea, and that around 20 crore consumers depend on its services.

He submitted that, given these circumstances, the Centre was willing to examine the issues raised by the company to ensure that consumer interests are safeguarded.

The bench noted that the petition has been filed seeking the quashing of additional AGR demands for 2016-17, and further directions to comprehensively reassess all dues.

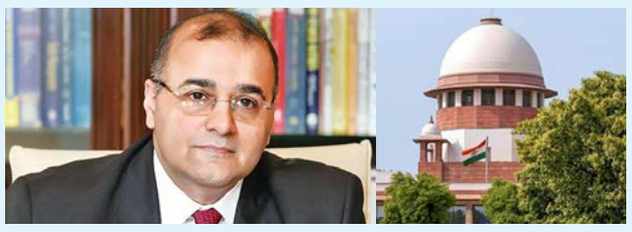
Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Vodafone Idea, argued that the DoT's additional demand of Rs 5,606 crore for FY 2016-17 was unsustainable since the dues had already been determined following the Supreme Court's 2019 verdict.

Vodafone Idea had filed a fresh plea against the DoT's demand of Rs 5,606 crore relating to 2016-17, which was disposed of on Monday by the bench, permitting the Centre to reconsider the issue.

Earlier, the Centre said that efforts were underway to arrive at a resolution with the company. —*PTI*

SC seeks CBI's response on ex-DHFL promoter's bail

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT



The Supreme Court of India has sought the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) response regarding a bail plea from **Kapil Wadhawan**, the former promoter of Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL), involved in an alleged Rs 34,926 crore bank fraud case.

A bench comprising Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi issued the notice following Wadhawan's bail denial by the Delhi High Court on 4 August, 2025.

The High Court had remarked that Wadhawan's conduct in custody was "not beyond reproach" and stated, "this court cannot permit the release of a person who is prima facie the mastermind of a deep-rooted financial fraud." The court highlighted that Wadhawan created 87 shell companies to siphon funds and posed a risk of tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses. Wadhawan has been in custody since 19 July, 2022.

The Court emphasised the seriousness of the allegations & potential impact on the ongoing trial. —*PTI*

World Bank grants $400M for Kerala's health initiative

T'PURAM, 27 OCT

The World Bank approved a USD 400 million (Rs 3,400 crore) financing package for Kerala's health programme, which includes a USD 280 million loan from the Bank itself, co-financed by the state government.

About 70 per cent of the funding—USD 280 million (Rs 2,400 crore)—will come from the World Bank, with the remaining amount provided by the state government.

The project aims to strengthen Kerala's public health systems and improve their efficiency, a release said on Monday.

According to the statement, Kerala prepared a detailed project report and submitted it to the Centre after receiving preliminary approval in 2023.

The World Bank's general body gave its final nod after a series of discussions between the state government and the Bank.

Health Minister Veena George said the project would bring major developments to the state's health sector.

The programme will bring together various departments to respond more effectively to emerging challenges, including those linked to climate change. —*PTI*

Honda invests in OMC; acquires 5-10% stake

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Japanese automobile giant Honda Motor Co Ltd has acquired a minority stake, estimated between 5-10 per cent, in Indian firm OMC Power, which is developing a 1 gigawatt (GW) renewable energy portfolio.

This investment coincides with OMC Power's expansion into a new business vertical involving electric vehicle (EV) battery deployment as battery energy storage systems (BESS), as well as repurposing old EV batteries for UPS solutions.

Rohit Chandra, MD & CEO of OMC Power, stated, "It is a win-win situation for both of us. Our partner is a leader in automobiles. It is coming up in EVs in a big way. Honda Motor will share its technical know-how, and we will provide them with the opportunities in our 1 GW journey."

This marks Honda's first investment in a distributed energy platform in India.

Notably, Honda Motor is now the third Japanese entity to invest in OMC Power, following Mitsui & Co. and Chubu Electric Power, which holds a 30 per cent stake as the largest Japanese investor. Chandra outlined that OMC Power's 1 GW capacity will include 600 MW from rooftop solar for the healthcare sector and 200 MW for telecom. —*PTI*

RS 382–RS 402 PER SHARE

Lenskart plans to raise ₹7,278 cr through IPO

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Eyewear retailer Lenskart Solutions has fixed a price band of Rs 382–Rs 402 per share for its forthcoming initial public offering (IPO), which is expected to value the company at over Rs 69,700 crore, marking one of the largest public issues in the consumer retail segment this year.

The Rs 7,278-crore IPO will open for public subscription on 31 October and close on 4 November, with bidding for anchor investors commencing on 30 October.

The issue includes a fresh share sale worth Rs 2,150 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of over 12.75 crore shares by promoters and existing investors.

Promoters **Peyush Bansal**, Neha Bansal, Amit Chaudhary, and Sumeet Kapahi, alongside major investors such as SoftBank's SVF II Lightbulb (Cayman) Ltd, Kedaara Capital, Schroders Capital, MacRitchie Investments, and Alpha Wave Ventures, will offload part of their stakes through the OFS.

Proceeds from the IPO will be used to open new company-owned, company-operated (CoCo) stores across India, meet lease and rental obligations, upgrade technology and cloud infrastructure, and boost brand marketing and business promotion.

Funds may also support strategic acquisitions and general corporate purposes.

Founded in 2008, Lenskart has grown into one of India's leading omni-channel eyewear retailers, with a strong presence in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities, and expanding operations in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

The company's shares are expected to list on Indian stock exchanges on 10 November. —*PTI*

2,178 STOCKS ADVANCE

Sensex jumps by 567 pts; Nifty closes above 25,900 mark

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

Benchmark BSE Sensex jumped by nearly 567 points and broader Nifty closed above 25,900 on Monday following a sharp rally in global markets, as softer-than-expected US inflation reignited hopes of Fed rate cuts this year.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 566.96 points or 0.67 per cent to settle at 84,778.84. During the day, it surged 720.2 points or 0.85 per cent to 84,932.08.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 170.90 points or 0.66 per cent to 25,966.05.

Prospects of a US-China trade deal and fresh foreign fund inflows also added to the markets' optimism, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, Eternal, State Bank of India, Tata Steel and HDFC Bank were the major gainers.

However, Kotak Mahindra Bank fell the most by 1.74 per cent after its September quarter results. The private lender reported an 11 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the September quarter.

Bharat Electronics, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were also among the laggards.

PSU banks index outperformed, rallying 2.76 per cent, whereas defence and media shares fell due to profit booking.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.72 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.51 per cent.

A total of 2,178 stocks advanced while 2,114 declined and 210 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

Milky Mist, Curefoods & 3 others get Sebi's nod for IPO

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Five companies, including dairy products maker Milky Mist Dairy Food and cloud kitchen operator Curefoods India, have received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to raise funds through initial public offerings (IPOs), a regulatory update showed on Monday. The other firms cleared are Steamhouse India, Gaja Alternative Asset Management (Gaja Capital), and Kanodia Cement.

- Steamhouse India, Gaja Alternative Asset Management, and Kanodia Cement are the other three firms.

The approvals, granted between 14 and 24 October, come amid strong primary market activity, with 84 firms already launching IPOs in 2025. Tamil Nadu-based Milky Mist plans to raise Rs 2,035 crore, including Rs 1,785 crore via fresh equity and Rs 250 crore through an offer for sale. Funds will be used for debt repayment, expansion and modernisation of its Perundurai facility.

Bengaluru-based Curefoods India aims to raise Rs 800 crore to expand its brands such as CakeZone and Nomad Pizza, besides adding new outlets and cloud kitchens. Steamhouse India and Gaja Capital have filed through SEBI's confidential pre-filing route, while Kanodia Cement's IPO will be a complete offer for sale of 1.49 crore shares. —*PTI*

AHEAD OF TARGET DEADLINE

Amazon crosses $20B e-commerce exports from India

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Amazon on Monday announced that it has surpassed the USD 20 billion milestone in cumulative e-commerce exports from India, achieving its target ahead of the 2025 deadline.

The company said it now aims to enable USD 80 billion in exports by 2030 through its flagship Amazon Global Selling program.

Launched in 2015, Amazon Global Selling has helped over 2 lakh Indian exporters sell more than 75 crore 'Made in India' products to customers across 18 international marketplaces, including the US, UK, UAE, Canada, Germany, and France.

The total seller base on the program has grown over 33 per cent in the past year, the company said.

"Since 2015, Amazon has enabled USD 20 billion in cumulative e-commerce exports from India, including through the Amazon Global Selling program, achieving this milestone ahead of the 2025 target," said Srinidhi Kalvapudi, Head of Amazon Global Selling India.

"This momentum reflects the ambition of Indian businesses and the growing role of e-commerce exports in global trade."

Kalvapudi added that the company remains committed to scaling up its efforts in line with India's export goals.

The program currently has sellers from 28 states, 7 union territories, and over 200 cities across India.

Exporters from states such as Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Haryana have emerged as the largest contributors. —*ANI*

TCS denies losing $1B Marks & Spencer contract

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has strongly rejected a UK media report alleging that Marks & Spencer (M&S) ended a $1 billion outsourcing contract with the Indian technology firm following a cyberattack incident earlier this year.

In a clarification issued to the stock exchanges, TCS described the report as misleading and factually incorrect, stating that it contained several inaccuracies, including an exaggerated contract value and an incorrect association with the cyber event.

The company explained that the M&S service desk contract had been part of a routine competitive tendering process initiated in January 2025, adding that the retailer's decision to work with other vendors was taken months before the cyber incident in April. TCS said the two developments were entirely unrelated.

TCS also highlighted that the service desk work formed only a minor component of its overall relationship with M&S. It continues to collaborate on multiple technology, digital, and business projects as part of a strategic long-term partnership. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

It's high time KSCA announces election: Prasad

BENGALURU, 27 CT

Former India pacer Venkatesh Prasad on Monday urged Karnataka State Cricket Association's incumbent administrators to conduct an election rather than clinging to peripheral clauses in the by-law to delay the proceedings. Prasad, along with seasoned administrator Vinay Mruthyunjaya and former Indian women's cricket team captain Shanta Rangaswamy, stated that the election should be initiated at the earliest to avoid the prevailing state of chaos within the association. "We have all been waiting for the announcement (of the election) to happen. It was supposed to happen long back, and by this time, a new committee should have taken over the running of the association," said Prasad here during a select media gathering. "So, obviously, you know, it (election) was supposed to be held before the 30th of September according to the rule and the KSCA by-law.

PHOTO: PTI

Cummins ruled out of Ashes opener, Smith to lead

CANBERRA, 27 OCT

Australia captain Pat Cummins has been ruled out of the first Ashes Test due to a back injury, with Steve Smith set to lead the side in his absence. The Australia captain has been sidelined with a back stress injury since July and had earlier this month said he was "less than likely" to feature in the first Test against England in Perth starting 21 November. "We've run out of time," head coach Andrew McDonald told reporters here. "We sort of flagged this a week or so ago that it would take sort of four plus weeks to get him up and running, and we've run out of time, unfortunately, but optimistic for the second Test match. —*PTI*

Hylo Open Super 500: Indian shuttlers handed tough draws

SAARBRUCKEN, 26 OCT

A host of Indian shuttlers, both experienced and youngsters, will face stiff competition with several tricky first-round encounters lined up across categories as they continue their quest for glory at the USD 475,000 Hylo Open Super 500 tournament beginning here on Tuesday. In the men's singles, 2021 World Championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen, who reached the finals at the Hong Kong Open, will be pitted against fifth seed Christo Popov of France, while US Open champion Ayush Shetty opens against Denmark's Victor Lai.—*PTI*

Anahat storms into Canadian Open quarters

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Reigning national champion Anahat Singh upset world No. 20 Melissa Alves of France to enter the quarterfinals of the Canadian Open in Toronto. Continued her impressive run, the 17-year-old from Delhi, ranked world No. 43, defeated sixth seed Alves 12-10, 12-10, 8-11, 11-2 in a 41-minute battle on Sunday. Anahat will next face second seed Tinne Gilis of Belgium for a place in the semifinals of the USD 96,250 PSA Silver event. Meanwhile, at the Toronto Athletic Club Open, sixth seed Veer Chotrani bowed out after a gripping five-game clash against England's Perry Malik, who prevailed 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 5-11, 11-5 in the round of 16. —*PTI*

Ranji Trophy: Prithvi slams third-fastest double ton

Karnataka remains firm favorites heading into Day 4

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Maharashtra opening batter Prithvi Shaw scored a double hundred during his side's second-round Ranji Trophy match against Chandigarh on Monday.

Shaw got to the landmark in just 141 balls, in Maharashtra's second innings of the match. This is now the third-fastest First-Class double ton by an Indian, only behind Ravi Shastri (123 balls vs Baroda in 1985) and Tanmay Agarwal (119 balls vs Arunachal Pradesh in 2024). Shaw was eventually dismissed for 222 off 156 balls.

This was Shaw's first Ranji hundred for Maharashtra. He reached the three-figure mark in just 72 balls, marking his 14th First-Class hundred. In the first innings, he had scored eight off nine balls.In his Ranji debut for Maharashtra, he had scored a sparkling 75 in the second innings against Kerala after falling for a duck in the first essay.

The weather and **Karnataka** haven't been on good terms in recent times. On Monday at the KSCA Navule Stadium in Shivamogga, they fell out again, with overnight rain and bad light eating up almost two hours of playing time and halting the host's charge towards securing the first-innings lead.By stumps on Day 3, Goa, from 28 for one, had reached 171 for six in reply to Karnataka's 371. Credit should also be given to the visitor's lower middle-order for digging its heels in, for Snehal Kauthankar's side was 51 for four at one stage and then 115 for six.

PRITHVI SHAW
PHOTO: PTI

Dhull, Doseja fifties extend Delhi's lead to 329

Yash Dhull smashed an attractive 70 off only 59 balls while Ayush Doseja continued his good form with an unbeaten 62 as Delhi extended their overall lead to 329 runs against Himachal Pradesh on the third day of their Ranji Trophy group D match here.

Play was called off early due to bad light as Delhi raced to 196 for 4 in just 32 overs courtesy Dhull and Doseja's rollicking stand that yielded 125 runs in 19.3 overs.

This was after Delhi dismissed Himachal Pradesh for 297 in their first innings to ensure a first-innings lead of 133. Veteran pacer Navdeep Saini took 3 for 52 while young Money Grewal had 2 for 47 to show for his efforts.

Shahbaz Ahmed shines with six for 34

Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed returned with impressive figures of 6 for 34 to help Bengal bundle out Gujarat for 167 and then post 170 for 6 in their second innings on the third and penultimate day of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Monday.

Resuming at the score of 107 for 7 in reply to Bengal's 279 all out, Gujarat were bowled out in 76.3 overs with Ahmed ruling the roost, while Mohammed Shami (3/44) scalped three wickets.

Skipper Manan (80 off 252 balls) top-scored for Gujarat with a patient knock, but didn't get any company from the other end. Sudip Kumar Gharami (54) and skipper Abhimanyu (25) shared 55 runs in 14.5 overs for the opening stand in Bengal's second innings. —*PTI*

FOCUS ON RECOVERY FROM INJURY

PV Sindhu withdraws from rest of 2025 season

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu on Monday decided to withdraw from all remaining BWF Tour events in 2025 to focus on complete recovery from a foot injury that she sustained ahead of the European leg.

The 30-year-old from Hyderabad shuttler said the decision was taken after detailed consultation with her support team and medical experts, including renowned sports orthopaedist Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala.

"After consulting closely with my team and with the guidance of the incredible Dr Pardiwala, we felt it was best for me to withdraw from all remaining BWF Tour events in 2025," Sindhu said in a statement on Monday.

"The foot injury I sustained before the European leg has not fully recovered, and while it is never easy to accept, injuries are an inseparable part of every athlete's journey. They test your resilience and patience, but they also spark the fire to come back stronger."

P V Sindhu
PHOTO: PTI

Sindhu, the 2019 world champion, said her rehabilitation and training were already underway under the supervision of Dr Wayne Lombard, with support from Nisha Rawat, Chetna, and her coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama.

"Under the constant care of Dr Wayne Lombard, the support of Nisha Rawat and Chetna, and the guidance of my coach Irwansyah, I am surrounded by a team that gives me strength every single day.

"Their belief in me fuels my own, and I feel motivated, grateful, and hungrier than ever for what lies ahead."

The Commonwealth Games champion has struggled with injuries and form for quite some time now.

After an early exit at the Paris Games, this year too has been far from ideal for Sindhu, who has endured multiple first and second round ousters, with quarterfinal finishes at the India Open Super 750, World Championships, and China Masters Super 750 being the highlight of the season.—*PTI*

YOUTH ASIAN GAMES

Weightlifter Priteesmita Bhoi breaks world record to win gold

BAHRAIN, 27 OCT

Weightlifter Priteesmita Bhoi broke the world youth record in clean and jerk on the way to clinching gold in the girls' 44kg category at the Youth Asian Games, here on Sunday night.

The 16-year-old lifted 92kg in clean and jerk to set the world youth record, and 66kg in snatch to aggregate 158kg to take the top podium spot in the competition.

On a day when India also struck silver in the boys' 60kg category, the teenage Priteesmita first lifted 87kg in her first attempt in the clean and jerk lift.

She improved it by three kilograms in her second lift and finally successfully heaved 92kgs for the record.

In snatch, following her successful lift of 66kg, she failed in her next two attempts of 68kg and 69kg.India's 17-year-old lifter Maharajan Arumugapandian clinched the boys' 60kg silver with an accumulated weight of 256kg. He lifted 114kg in snatch and 142 kg in clean and jerk. China's Chen Xunfa bagged the gold with an aggregate of 261kg (120kg in snatch, 141 kg in clean and jerk).

With this performance, India took its medal tally to 23, including three gold, nine silver, and 11 bronze. —*PTI*

Juventus sacks coach Igor Tudor

JOHANNESBURG, 27 OCT

Juventus on Monday announced that it has sacked coach Igor Tudor after seven months in the job.The news comes a day after the team lost 1-0 away to Lazio, extending its winless run to eight games, ending the Croatian manager's tenure after replacing Thiago Motta as head coach of Juventus on 23 March, 2025. The Italian club released a statement on social media to announce the news, following three consecutive losses. "Juventus FC announces that it has today relieved Igor Tudor of his duties as coach of the men's first team. —*PTI*

Punjab FC cruises past Gokulam Kerala

KOCHI, 27 OCT

Three first-half goals handed Punjab FC a comfortable 3-0 victory over Gokulam Kerala FC in the Group C opener of the Super Cup in Goa on Monday.

Muhammad Suhail Nikhil Prabhu, and Princeton Rebello scored the goals for the Shers as they secured all three points.Punjab's Samir Zeljkovic tested Shibinraj Kunniyil in the opposition goal with a long-range shot in the first minute of the game, which was pushed away.

The Shers took the lead in the very next minute with Suhail continuing his goal-scoring form. He cut inside from the left wing and his attempted cross took a huge deflection off Gursimrat Singh and found the net wrong wrong-footing the goalkeeper.Punjab continued to put pressure on the opposition with Kipgen forcing a diving save off the goalkeeper.

The resultant corner taken by Princeton Rebello was diverted expertly by Nikhil, who found himself free inside the box to give his side a two-goal lead. Gokulam, stunned by conceding an early two-goal lead, came into the game in the next phase with Eduardo Martinez hitting the crossbar twice, once from a direct free kick. Punjab scored its third goal two minutes before the break, with Princeton Rebello scoring his first for the Shers. —*PTI*

Pratika Rawal ruled out of the Women's World Cup

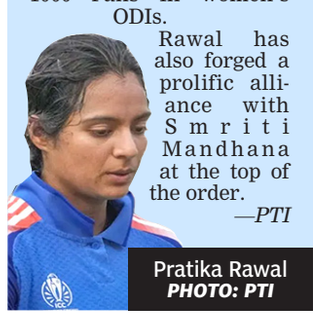
NAVI MUMBAI, 27 OCT

In a major blow to India, in-form opener Pratika Rawal was on Monday ruled out of the remainder of the Women's World Cup after injuring her knee and ankle during the game against Bangladesh.

The 25-year-old had twisted her right ankle during India's last league match at the DY Patil Stadium here on Sunday.

"The manner in which she fell, it became clear that she would not be available for the knockout games. It is very unfortunate," a BCCI source told PTI.

Rawal's right foot got stuck into the turf on the final ball of the 21st over as she ran in from deep midwicket to stop the ball, and collapsed immediately, grimacing in pain. Indian players ran towards their teammate while a stretcher was also taken to the spot, but Rawal walked off the field with assistance from the support staff. Rawal has been in stellar form throughout the tournament, amassing 308 runs from six innings at an average of 51.33. She hit her maiden World Cup century in the game against New Zealand. In the process, she also became the joint-fastest to 1000 runs in women's ODIs.



Pratika Rawal
PHOTO: PTI

Rawal has also forged a prolific alliance with Smriti Mandhana at the top of the order.

—*PTI*

Bavuma returns from injury to lead SA in India

JOHANNESBURG, 27 OCT

Captain Temba Bavuma returned to the South Africa squad on Monday for the two-Test series in India after recovering from a calf injury.

The series begins on November 14 with matches scheduled in Guwahati and Kolkata.

Bavuma was not part of the recent two-match series in Pakistan that his team drew with the hosts. The majority of the squad from the Pakistan series has been retained, with David Bedingham making way for Bavuma.

Bavuma, who led his team to the title in the previous World Test Championship cycle, is also likely to play the preceding shadow series against India A beginning in Bengaluru on November 2.

The A series will also mark the return of Rishabh Pant from injury.

South Africa's spin trio of Simon Harmer, Keshav Maharaj, and Senuran Muthusamy had made a big impact on the turning tracks in Pakistan, and they could trouble the Indian batters in their own backyard. It remains to be seen what kind of pitches India dish out, having not opted for rank turners against the West Indies earlier this month. —*PTI*

Surya's batting form doesn't concern me: Gautam Gambhir

SYDNEY, 27 OCT

India's head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday said he is not perturbed by T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav's poor form as "failures are inevitable" when the team is focused on playing an ultra-aggressive brand of cricket.

Suryakumar Yadav
PHOTO: PTI

While India won the Asia Cup tournament last month in the UAE under his captaincy, Suryakumar's own form with the bat left a lot to be desired as he managed just 72 runs in seven innings. However, he has now found backing from the team's head coach."Honestly, Surya's batting form doesn't concern me because we have committed to an ultra-aggressive template in our dressing room.

When you embrace this philosophy, failures are inevitable," Gambhir said during a discussion on JioHotstar."It would be easy for Surya to score 40 runs off 30 balls and avoid criticism, but we have collectively decided that it's acceptable to fail while pursuing this approach," he added. Even as Surya was struggling with the willow, the likes of Abhishek Sharma and Tilak Varma lit up the tournament with their explosive batting. Gambhir said the focus is not on individuals but on the team as a whole."Currently, Abhishek Sharma is in good form and has maintained it throughout the Asia Cup.

When Surya finds his rhythm, he will shoulder the responsibility accordingly. —*PTI*

CONDITION IS STABLE

Iyer out of ICU but may remain in hospital

SYDNEY, 27 OCT

Star Indian middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer, who was admitted to a hospital in Sydney after suffering an injury while taking a catch in the third India-Australia ODI match at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) on Saturday (25 October), has been moved out of the ICU.

According to a fresh report in Cricbuzz on Monday (27 October), the 30-year-old right-handed batter from Mumbai, who is also the vice-captain of India's ODI side now, is recovering well and has been moved out of the ICU.

"Shreyas Iyer's health remains delicate but stable. The BCCI has assigned the team doctor to monitor him closely, and the 30-year-old is understood to be recovering well," the report read.

Shreyas Iyer
PHOTO: PTI

India ODI vice-captain Shreyas Iyer has been admitted to a hospital in Sydney in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after suffering internal bleeding resulting from a rib cage injury sustained during the third match against Australia.

Iyer, who had taken a brilliant catch while running backward from backward point to dismiss Alex Carey, appeared to have injured his left rib cage in the process.

According to sources, Iyer fainted in the dressing room, and his vital parameters were alarmingly low. He was rushed to the hospital soon after, with scans revealing he sustained a "laceration injury to the spleen".

"Shreyas Iyer sustained an impact injury to his left lower rib cage region...He was taken to the hospital for further evaluation. Scans have revealed a laceration injury to the spleen. —*PTI*

Lando Norris claims 'beautiful' Mexico win

MEXICO CITY, 27 OCT

Lando Norris regained the lead in the drivers' world championship for the first time in six months on Sunday night when he steered his McLaren to a commanding victory in a breathless Mexico Grand Prix.

Driving with great authority, the 25-year-old Briton came home 30.324 seconds ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, with four-time champion Max Verstappen third for Red Bull. For Norris, it was a first win in Mexico, his sixth this season and the 10th of his career, achieved with a near-perfect race from pole position to lift him back to the top of the drivers' title race by one point for the first time since the Saudi Arabian race in April.

With four races remaining, Norris has 357 points, ahead of Piastri on 356 and Verstappen, who is third on 321.

"A beautiful win to celebrate here in this stadium in Mexico," said Norris.

"It's one weekend at a time for me. I am happy, and I am focused on myself. I am just keeping my head down and I keep to myself. —*PTI*